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LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

Self Assessment and Action Planning Resource for Supporting Looked After Young People and Care Leavers in Post-16 Learning

This resource has been developed by Learning and Work Institute (L&W), in partnership with the Welsh Government.

L&W is a campaigning, policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion in Wales and the UK. We bring together 90 years of combined history and heritage from 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education' and 'Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion'. We want everyone to realise their potential in learning, work and throughout their life.

In the summer of 2015 we worked with Buttle UK¹, Welsh Government and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to produce a 'Guide to good practice in colleges receiving the Buttle UK Quality Mark', which can be seen [here](#).

The purpose of this resource is to enable all post-16 learning providers to develop effective and comprehensive provision that secures good educational outcomes for looked after young people and care leavers (LAYP/CL).

Like all young people, LAYP/CL have different needs, interests and motivations to learn. They need access to a range of learning provision that provides access to different pathways and enables them to develop the skills they need to lead full, active and independent lives as young workers, parents and citizens.

The resource will be of use to providers across the learning and skills sector including further education institutions', work based learning providers, higher education institutions and youth, adult and community learning services – all of whom have a key role to play in enabling looked after LAYP/CL to achieve their potential.

This resource closely follows the 4 key sections of the Buttle UK Quality Mark Framework, which are:

- Raising aspirations and pre-entry outreach
- Application, entry and induction
- On-going support
- Monitoring outcomes and impact

In this resource you will find examples of good practice and reflective questions to assess current performance, in each of these areas.

This will enable individual providers to set their own SMART targets for the future development of their provision and support for LAYP/CL.

¹ The Buttle UK Quality Mark provided a framework that allowed universities, and later on, further education institutions, to develop their support for children and young people who had experienced care. In order to be awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark organisations had to offer a minimum level of support to care leavers, but also demonstrate a commitment to improving their provision further.

Looked After Young People and Care Leavers (LAYP/CL)

The purpose of this resource is to enable post-16 learning providers to develop effective and comprehensive provision that secures good educational outcomes for young people who are currently in local authority care, or have been in local authority care.

Throughout this resource we use the term 'looked after young people and care leavers' (LAYP/CL) to refer to this group.

Challenges Faced by LAYP/CL

For most young people, being taken into care is a traumatic experience that typically has a huge impact – not only whilst a young person is in care, but throughout their lives:

- 70% of prostitutes and 25% of prisoners have been in care.

- LAYP/CL are around four times more likely to commit suicide than anyone else.
- Around 50% of young men aged under-21, in the criminal justice system, have spent time in care.

Over the past five years the educational attainment of LAYP/CL in Wales has been steadily improving. However, there's still a long way to go. Data shows that in 2015, just 18% of looked after young people achieved 5 GCSEs at grade A*-C (including English or Welsh first language and maths) compared to 58% of all pupils in Wales.

These outcomes are shocking. However, when good support is in place, LAYP/CLs can and do achieve highly.

Improving the educational attainment of LAYP/CL is crucial in improving their long term life chances. Learning providers have both an opportunity and a responsibility to ensure that their provision and the support

they offer really engages LAYP/CL, enables them to have confidence in themselves, overcome practical barriers, develop strong aspirations and achieve their potential in learning, and on their journey towards employment. In doing so, it's crucial that providers have an informed understanding of the challenges and barriers that LAYP/CL often face:

- Frequent moves – both in terms of home/care arrangements and school - are not uncommon. This can be frightening and unsettling for a young person and make it hard for them to focus on learning. When school moves are delayed, young people may miss out on chunks of learning and find it difficult to catch up. In addition, young people are often not asked about their preference for moving school or home – this can leave them feeling disempowered - that their preferences and opinions don't matter.

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- Feeling that learning is not important – when consulted, older care leavers often say that they feel their education has not been considered important or a priority by the professionals and carers in their lives. As a consequence, many LAYP/CL may find it hard to develop aspirations, think about their learning goals and understand the value of education.
 - Emotional stress – being taken into care is a traumatic experience for most young people. Frequent moves, alongside bullying, stigma and discrimination often adds to the trauma and creates emotional stress, which inevitably impacts upon all areas of a young person's life, including their ability to focus on learning.
 - Being taken out of lessons – meetings with social workers and other professionals are often held during the

school day. This means that LAYP/CL are often taken out of lessons to attend. Not only do they miss out on lessons, free time or other activities, they also often feel 'singled out' and different. Peers often notice too, which can lead to or reinforce stigma, discrimination and bullying.

- Support to learn at home – most young people get help and support from parents and/or wider family with homework and other learning outside of school. LAYP/CL often miss out on this. Carers may not always value, prioritise or understand the importance of supporting learning – others may not have the skills, knowledge or confidence to do so.
- Relationships and attachment – being separated from family, frequent home/school moves, bullying and discrimination can affect the relationships that a young

person forms and their attachment to the people in their lives. Sometimes this can lead to a young person feeling more isolated and alone and reluctant to trust people that they meet. However, when good friendships and relationships are formed, young people recognise the positive impact that this has on them.

These are just some of the challenges that LAYP/CL face, which impact upon their education and their wider lives. It is important that all learning providers have an insight into young people's experiences and the impact that these experiences have upon them. Section five of this resource provides links to organisations, relevant policy and research that provides detailed insight into these, and the many other challenges, that LAYP/CL often face.

Welsh Government Strategy

In January 2016, Welsh Government published a new strategy

'Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales'.

The aim of the strategy is to drive up the educational performance of children and young people who are looked after. It's

accompanied by a detailed action plan, with a timeframe for completion by Welsh Government and key partners.

This resource supports the ambitions of the strategy and Welsh Government's commitment to securing good outcomes for all looked after children and young people.

Organisations are encouraged to use this resource to identify and develop their own good practice and share this practice with other education and training providers and partners with whom they work.

You can explore the information under each section of the resource by selecting the  button and you can return to this menu at any time by selecting the  button

1. RAISING AWARENESS AND PRE-ENTRY OUTREACH

2. APPLICATION, ENTRY AND INDUCTION

3. ONGOING SUPPORT

4. MONITORING OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

5. LEARNER VOICE AND USEFUL LINKS

6. SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

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RAISING AWARENESS AND PRE-ENTRY OUTREACH

You can explore the self-assessment and monitoring guidance for each section by selecting



- Developing effective links with relevant organisations
- Effectively publicise the support the organisation offers

Guidance for Developing Effective Links with Relevant Organisations

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current awareness raising activity and pre-entry outreach to potential LAYP/CL.

- Sharing data and making available relevant information, advice and guidance about progression and what learning options are available.
- Ensure that outreach activities offered are accessible.
- Make available information on the organisation and the support available for learning.
- Share information on LAYP/CL learners and their support needs.
- Offer impartial pre-entry financial advice and information on support services.
- Collaborate with schools, FE, HE, work based learning and other organisations to make available information on learning and support.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

Sharing data and making available relevant information, advice and guidance about progression and what learning options are available

- What approaches and mechanisms do you use to link with local authorities, health and social care trusts and other relevant organisations?
- What stage are these relationships/links at, what is the history, and what is planned for the future?
- How local are these relationships?
- Who is involved in these relationships in the organisation? What happens to these internal and external relationships/links if they leave?
- What is the purpose of the relationship/link, how does it benefit the young person, is it sustainable both financially and strategically?
- What information is available about your provision and support currently for LAYP/CL? What form is it in? How can they access it? How do you distribute it?
- Is the information appropriate? How do you know? What feedback, if any, is received?

'Participating in regional groups promotes good practice and builds better relationships between organisations, including FE and HE providers, local authorities, trusts and charities'.

Neath Port Talbot College Group regularly reviews and updates its protocol with the local authority; the time spent on this allows for an evaluation process on what works and makes sure that new staff are on board.



Reflective Questions:

Ensure that outreach activities offered are accessible

- Are there any arrangements to address barriers to outreach activities (taster days, open days, summer schools) such as late bookings, cost, travel etc?
- If so is there any evidence that these arrangements are appropriate?
- Is the nature, format and delivery of the outreach activity appropriate, and how do you know?
- Is it stand-alone or part of a programme (e.g. learner progression framework)?
- Do you have any evidence of impact of activities on subsequent applications and can this information be fed back to Local Authorities (LA's) and other stakeholders?
- Are there any statistics or evaluations on activities to demonstrate effectiveness? Including feedback from participants, carers or supporting staff?

'Summer schools can ease the transition to post-16 provision for LAYP/CL. They allow potential learners to meet other learners in similar situations and get to know the provider's key workers. This helps to bridge the gap for learners who are or have been in the care system'.

Summer schools usually consist of team building activities and taster sessions and can be marketed on the basis that attendance may increase potential learners' likelihood of being accepted onto provision.



Reflective Questions:

Make available information on the organisation and the support available for learning

- What information is available on the organisation and the support available for learning?
- Is the information targeted at the different stakeholders (LAYP/CL, carers, and professionals)?
- How is the information made available (location, format etc.)?
- Is the format appropriate and what impact is the information having?

At Forth Valley College, staff visit schools, residential care homes, foster carers and 'Through-care' and 'Aftercare' services to share information on studying at the college and to answer any questions.. The college has compiled an extensive list of contacts who work with LAYP/CL and use these to promote the support that the college can offer.

Sharing information on LAYP/CL and their support needs

- What information is shared, how is it shared?
- How is the information used and is it having an impact?
- How do you know what impact the information is having?
- Who holds the information and are there signed protocols in use?
(guidance and information on sharing protocols can be found at the Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information - WASPI)

College staff have direct involvement with pre-application work and marketing in schools and at local educational outreach events.



Reflective Questions:

Offer impartial pre-entry financial advice and information on support services

- How is the advice offered, by whom and when?
- Is the advice offered linked to bursaries, guaranteed funds etc?
- In terms of progression, how far ahead can advice be given, e.g. can advice be given on university funding to 14 year olds, so that long term ambitions can be set?

In some colleges a 'designated person' works closely with learner services teams, social services and local authority leaving care teams to ensure that LAYP/CL get all the advice and guidance they need. In addition, specialist advice from internal staff and external partners is arranged as needed.

Collaborate with schools, FE, HE, work based learning and other organisations to make information available on study and support options

- What are the advantages of the partnership, and who supports it?
- How is information updated and distributed to partners?
- How does your organisation know these partnerships are effective – data, statistics, feedback?

NPTC Group have Careers Wales staff based at the college who work closely with the 'designated person' to ensure that LAYP/CL have access to impartial advice and guidance.

Good practice examples for Raising Awareness and Pre-Entry Outreach

- **Peterborough Regional College** developed strong collaboration with local authorities and other organisations, supporting learners pre and post-16, by developing protocols/data sharing agreements. This included the ongoing identification of LAYP/CL pre-application, at entry and on-programme.
- **Derby College** is one of the largest colleges in England. It attracts learners from Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. This requires communication with all relevant local authorities and other local stakeholders, including large employers. A multi-agency approach is considered essential and the College's designated person commented that – ".....key to our support for the learners here is that link with the external agencies."
- A good understanding of the support a LAC/CL requires across the board is needed. At **NPTC Group** this awareness is developed from good relationship with the local authority and other key players, both to avoid double funding and to maximise the efficient use of resources.
- **NPTC Group and Glasgow Kelvin College** are clear about the importance of placing the experience of the LAYP/CL at the centre of the activity and in ensuring that their voice is heard. Building a relationship of trust based on mutual respect, is paramount. Young people are often involved in planning their college experience as well as feeding back; taster workshops and away days can help with this.
- For more information on good practice view:
A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.

Guidance to Effectively Publicise the Support the Organisation Offers

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current activity to effectively publicise the support your organisation offers .

Easily accessible web pages with specific information on support available and contact details of staff responsible for LAYP/CL at the organisation.

Widely accessible flyers and brochures with specific information on support available and contact details of staff responsible for LAYP/CL at the organisation.



Reflective Questions:

Easily accessible web pages with specific information on support available and contact details of staff responsible for LAYP/CL at the organisation

- Is information about support for LAYP/CL in a logical place on your website? How do you know? Have you asked LAYP/CL for their feedback?
- Is the content appropriate and engaging for the intended audience in terms of design, layout and written information?
- Are the contact details easy to find and updated regularly?
- Does the website search engine work for terminology – e.g. 'looked after' or 'care leaver'?

"We have clear and accessible information for carers and looked after young people on the website". **NPTC Group** and **Northbrook College** websites include the name and contact details of the designated member of staff so that LAYP/CL, local authorities, foster carers all know who to contact for advice and information.

Rather than use terms like 'Vulnerable Bursary' **Hugh Baird College** has developed its own scheme the 'Individual Costing Action Plan' or ICAP – and all support flows through this. A key member of staff is allocated to each student through ICAP avoiding drawing further attention to specific LAYP/CL learners.

Example Website Links

Good practice examples for Raising Awareness and Pre-Entry Outreach



Reflective Questions:

Widely accessible flyers and brochures with specific information on support available and contact details of staff responsible for LAYP/CL at the organisation

- Is the design and content of flyers and brochures engaging and appropriate?
- Is the content easy to understand and has it been evaluated by LAYP/CL?
- Is the material visible within the organisation and readily available? Is it shared with wider support agencies and organisations that work specifically with LAYP/CL?

Forth Valley College's Marketing Department has produced information leaflets aimed specifically at LAYP/CL applicants and associated external contacts. These leaflets are used at open days/evenings, for visits to schools and residential homes, and are given to external contacts at stakeholder meetings. [Click the leaflets to view.](#)



PREPARE FOR COLLEGE

Are you a care leaver who has been:

- **looked after at home?**
- **in Care?**
- **in Kinship Care?**
- **in Throughcare or Aftercare?**

Yes, then why not get in touch.
Forth Valley College can help you
get into a college course.

For more information, on how we can help:
www.forthvalley.ac.uk/learner_advisory_team



If you want to pop in for a friendly chat about anything from accommodation to courses, please contact one of our Learner Advisors:

Angela Smith

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Kerr McCreath

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Email: advice@forthvalley.ac.uk

or contact Ernie Romer (Schools Provision Co-ordinator) on:
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All information was correct at time of publishing, but may be subject to change. CM091



Checklist of Support



Guidance and Student Support Staff

If you want to pop in for a friendly chat about anything please contact one of our Learner Advisors:

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INFORMATION FOR LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE & CARE LEAVERS



Forth Valley College wants all Looked After Young People/Care Leaver (LAP/CL) students, to be successful during their time studying here. We want them all to gain a place on an appropriate course, learn new skills, gain qualifications, and progress into a positive destination whether that be further education, higher education, training or employment. We support Curriculum for Excellence by encouraging LAP/CL students to continuously pursue Lifelong Learning and to always develop their Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work. We want our LAP/CL students to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

We have dedicated Guidance and Student Support staff at each of our campuses, offering specialist help to students who have been, or are currently, looked after by their local authority or in kinship care.

Our staff understand the challenges people in the care system may face and can offer support in a number of ways.

The support offered is wide and varied and depends on each individual student and what is right for them, but broadly includes:

- 1:1 support and guidance in school or other pre-16 setting
- Support through the pre-entry and application phase of moving on to college
- A guaranteed interview for applicants meeting the criteria for course entry
- Summer school

- Continued 1:1 support when attending college including liaison with delivery staff, the Funding Team and Learner Advisors.
- Help with core skills such as literacy, numeracy, communication, etc.
- Help with student finance, childcare and study issues
- Help to find part-time or voluntary work

Applicants are strongly encouraged to indicate they have been in care via their college online application. This information will allow the Student Services team to contact applicants and ensure they are aware of the wide range of support available pre-entry and on-course, e.g. course choice, financial support, student support and confidential advice available to them.

Summer School

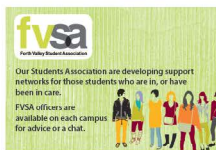
We also run a Summer School which aims to ease the transition to study at college and allows students to meet other students in similar situations and get to know their key workers in college.

- Bridges the gap for those who are, or have been, in the care system between leaving school and going to college
- Assists in smoothing the transition to college life
- Engages potential students in positive activity over the summer
- Enhances potential students likelihood of being accepted onto identified college courses

Summer School highlights:

- Take part in fun team building activities
- You meet new people/make new friends
- You may receive support with your travel costs
- You may get certification for some activities
- You meet college staff
- It's helpful and worthwhile
- You can tour the college facilities
- You will get a chance to try a variety of activities

For enquiries about our Summer School, please contact Scott Harrison at: scott.harrison@forthvalley.ac.uk or on: (01324) 403008.



Partnership Working

Former Forth Valley College LAP/CL students have shared their appreciation of the support they have received in college and how it helped them to successfully complete qualifications and progress into further education, training and employment. One student came from a background in foster care, received support with finances and their Additional Support Needs and attended college on a later course. With the support and guidance of Forth Valley College staff, and with their own hard work and commitment, this student progressed onto an HNC course and is now attending university. We want this success story to be yours as well!



2

APPLICATION, ENTRY AND INDUCTION

You can explore the self-assessment and monitoring guidance for each section by selecting



- Application
- Entry and Induction

Guidance for the Application Process

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current awareness raising activity and pre-entry outreach to potential LAYP/CL.

- Identify a designated member of staff to act as a key point of contact and advisor for LAYP/CL, to provide support prior to and on entry.

Have in place methods of identifying LAYP/CL and establish contact with them as appropriate.

- Ensure information on the full range of support offered to learners, their carers and professionals supporting them is readily available and easily accessible and that help with applying for financial support is provided.

Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements.

Offer transition support before the course starts to help learners and their carers feel comfortable with the organisation.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

Identifying a designated member of staff to act as a key point of contact and advisor for LAYP/CL to provide support prior to and on entry

- Do you have a designated member of staff?
- In which department does the responsibility sit?
- What is the longevity of the role – is it protected, included in a role job description?
- What is the role's specification / required expertise – does it specifically include experience of working with LAYP/CL?
- How does this person interact with both internal and external partners?
- What reporting and evaluation mechanisms are there in place to assess the effectiveness of the role?

Good practice suggests that learners should be introduced very early in the year to the designated member of staff. Learners should be contacted to let them know who the designated member of staff is and what they can offer, stressing that they will not 'push themselves on to them' but that support is there if they need it. It is widely believed that if you try to overdevelop the relationship then the learners will back away.

Hugh Baird College has a range of staff supporting students entitled to bursaries. This forms the entry point for their access to support.



Reflective Questions:

Having in place a method of identifying LAYP/CL and establishing contact with them as appropriate

- How does the process work and how was it developed?
- Is the process effective, can it be improved?
- What is the effect of the method, can early interventions and advice be given at this stage?
- What is the process and procedure after identification?
- How proactive is the organisation in identifying at various stages – pre-entry, enrolment, on course?

Good practice suggests that organisations should try to work well in advance of application stage to identify and support possible LAYP/CL who might attend any provision offered. However, organisations also need to be prepared for learners who have not disclosed and for issues that might emerge throughout the time the care leaver is accessing provision.



Reflective Questions:

Ensuring information on the full range of support offered to learners, their carers and professionals supporting them is readily available and easily accessible and that help with applying for financial support is provided

- Are web pages and leaflets with information on specific support available and contact details of appropriate staff easily accessible?
- Are the methods of communicating and content appropriate and effective?
- How are the methods evaluated and improved upon over time?
- Does the information cover a full range of support needs, e.g. financial, welfare, accommodation and academic?

'Successful support allows care leavers themselves to guide the process for support, and so this must begin with any member of staff that a care leaver/looked after young person chooses to talk to'.

- **Hugh Baird College**



Reflective Questions:

Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements

(e.g. Interview guarantees, activities to keep learners engaged until the start of their course, flexible intake dates for courses)

- What is offered and does it make a difference?
- Is it valued by learners and the professionals supporting them?
- What is the rationale for the support and activity, who agreed to it and where does money come from to fund it?

At **Peterborough College**, all applicants are offered an interview and the guarantee that a suitable course will be found for them, if not internally, then through outward referral to another provider.

Some organisations offer early interviews as part of their support to LAYP/CL, and also summer programmes and tasters, which can help learners stay involved and motivated before the courses start.



Reflective Questions:

Offering transition support before the course starts to help learners and their carers feel comfortable with the organisation

- What transitional support is offered and what is the expected impact?
- What is the evidence that this support makes a difference?
- How is it made sustainable? Perhaps by dedicated staff or by using other mainstream functions e.g. For all learners at risk?

Glasgow Kelvin College offers a 'Transition to Learning and Work' programme for learners referred through local authority partners including Glasgow City Council Social Work Services and local schools. This intensive programme provides youth work style learning activities which develop the capacity of young people to work together and to learn, as well as introductory vocational experiences.

Good practice examples for the Application Process

- Some providers have learner support teams that cover a range of areas. Learners are allocated one named worker who they can seek out first, but others are also there in the event the designated person is unavailable.
- **West Highland College UHI** offer their support through a comprehensive set of opportunities for students. Drop in sessions are available and individual appointments are made with the Student Services Team to discuss funding options and any concerns of a financial nature, prior to their course start date and throughout the student journey.
- The timing of courses is important. **Sheffield and Peterborough Colleges** have roll-on, roll off programmes and many organisations offer January intakes, while others offer summer programmes.
- **Hugh Baird College and NPTC Group** work hard in the run-up to enrolment to ensure that application forms are fully completed so that any students who might need extra support are able to be reassured. Many students need support in completing the form, particularly in understanding the implications of disclosing or not disclosing information about being in care.
- For more information on good practice view: **A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.**

Guidance for the Entry and Induction Process

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current entry and induction processes and support on offer to potential LAYP/CL

- When determining the support needs of learners, ensure that the individual's circumstances are reflected in the support offered.
On enrolment ensure that learners are given opportunities to identify as having a care background.
Ensure that staff supporting enrolment and interviewing learners have received training on the needs and experiences of LAYP/CL.

Ensure that links with learner's social worker / personal advisor / virtual school are established.

Ensure help with applying for financial support is provided.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

When determining the support needs of applicants, ensure that the individual's circumstances are reflected in the support offered

- What is the process used to determine individual learner's needs?
- How is this impact captured and measured?

At **Derby College**, the support teams become involved if attendance drops below a level deemed acceptable, but the approach to rectifying the problem is tailored to meet the individual needs of the care leaving student, rather than moving quickly to disciplinary.

Most organisations support LAYP/CL to be able to claim their allowances and find ways of administering it in flexible ways, that meet the individual's needs. This can include, for example, dividing the bursary into smaller amounts and paying it weekly rather than monthly, to help with budgeting. Travel costs are often directly funded.



Reflective Questions:

On enrolment ensure that learners are given opportunities to identify as having a care background

e.g. tick box on enrolment forms, information on website and in written material encouraging disclosure at enrolment stage and ensuring that enrolment staff ask young people if they have a care background.

- What approach is used and who advised on this approach (LAYP/CL, social workers etc)?
- Does the approach work, how does the organisation know it works?
- Are there processes in place to develop and improve the approach?
- What happens when a young person discloses that they are from a care background? Are clearly defined processes and actions in place to ensure consistent support?

Some colleges specifically consider a young person's right to non-disclosure - not all LAYP/CL choose to disclose their status, for a range of reasons.

Northbrook College insists that it is part of the job of the support staff to ensure that all learners know who to turn to when they need extra support.



Reflective Questions:

Ensure that staff supporting enrolment and interviewing learners have received training on the needs and experiences of LAYP/CL

- Is the training sustainable?
- Who delivers the training?
- What happens if staff leave or new staff start?
- What is the impact of the training?
- How is this impact captured and evidenced?

Training about the needs of LAYP/CL is offered specifically for tutors and those with pastoral care responsibilities at **Peterborough Regional College**.

Dumfries and Galloway College provide awareness raising training for support teams. In general, however, colleges tend to involve specialist support staff in enrolling and interviewing LAYP/CL, in advance of the main enrolment days.



Reflective Questions:

Ensure that links with the learner's social worker/personal advisor/virtual school are established

- Is consent needed from the learner to make contact and to share information?
- How has the process of establishing these links developed and what direction has it taken?
- What impact have these links had and what are the plans for the future?
- Are there different processes for pre and post-18 learners? Consider implementing flexible processes for LAYP/CL based on their individual needs, rather than their age, as this will enable smoother transitions.

Active participation in regional groups of stakeholders, to share and promote good practice, and build relationships between organisations and other key stakeholders is essential.

By developing good links with external support agencies, providers are able to ensure that the holistic needs of care leavers are met. This is particularly important if crises occur – such as a breakdown in accommodation, which, if not addressed quickly, can result in a young person dropping out of provision.



Reflective Questions:

Ensuring that help with applying for financial support is provided

- How is the help provided and who by?
- What is the need and effectiveness of the approach?
- Is a full list of bursaries and other financial support readily available?
- What other financial support could be provided?
- Which specialist external agencies could you refer to for financial support, e.g. CAB or benefits advisors?

At **NPTC Group** the college support staff ensure that finances are provided for all aspects of a programme. For example, university visits; sometimes the local authority has a budget for this type of activity, so the importance of working in partnership cannot be over-stressed.

Support staff check to ensure that the right budget is being used to support the range of kit and activities the young person needs. Again the focus is on making sure the LAYP/CL are not singled out and can carry out activities with their peers.

Good practice examples for the Entry and Induction Process

- As soon as a LAYP/CL arrives at the provider, the provider needs to build a dialogue between the intervention team and the learning staff.
- At **Derby College**, providing they give their consent, every LAYP/CL is allocated a personal coach and a named member of the academic staff in the appropriate curriculum area, where the young person is studying.
- At **Hugh Baird College**, the support staff ensure that the learner has all the 'kit' they need (tools, protective clothing etc.) before the course starts so that they can start on the same day, with other students .
- **Peterborough Regional College** tailors payments to meet the student's needs, and as an example they now make weekly payments throughout the academic year (44 weeks rather than 36 weeks) this prevents financial barriers when returning to study after the half term break.
- For more information on good practice view:
A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.

3

ON-GOING SUPPORT

You can explore the self-assessment and monitoring guidance for each section by selecting



Key point of contact and advisor throughout the duration of the learner's course.

Financial support for the learner is in place throughout their time at the organisation.

Other support on offer for the learners.

Guidance for a Key Point of Contact and Advisor throughout the duration of the learner's course

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current application process and support on offer to potential LAYP/CL

- Ensure learners are introduced to the designated member of staff for LAYP/CL learners at the organisation and if appropriate mentors and other support staff. It is vital that there is a member of staff the learner is able to ask for advice and support and build a relationship of trust with for the duration of their course.

Ensure proactive support for LAYP/CL. Individual learners may not feel comfortable asking for support.

The designated member of staff should also be the point of contact for other staff within the organisation.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

Ensure learners are introduced to the designated member of staff for LAYP/CL at the organisation and if appropriate mentors and other support staff

- If this is a different person to the designated person prior to and on entry – how is this communicated to the learner?
- How does this role work within the organisation and link externally to relevant stakeholders?
- What are the advantages of the approach used and to whom?
- How does it work in practice – how does the named person relate to LAYP/CL and how are they related to by other members of staff?
- What is the desired outcome of all communication? What is the aim of the approach in benefitting the LAYP/CL and does it work?

Hugh Baird College's cross-college support team and its links with support for other 'vulnerable' or potentially disadvantaged students helps to ensure that there is always one key contact point for learners, with cover if they should not be available.

Neath Port Talbot College (NPTC) Group have a support team approach but with clear leadership. With campuses across more than one geographical area there is a deputy designated person in one part of Wales, while the lead role is based at the main campus further south.



Reflective Questions:

Ensure proactive support for LAYP/CL. Individual learners may not feel comfortable asking for support

- How is the approach pro-active rather than reactive, and does it work in reality?
- Is regular contact with learners maintained proactively, even with those who do not initially indicate a need for support?
- Which approaches have been tried out and developed?

At **Forth Valley College** there is a Learner Adviser in each campus, on a duty rota, to support LAYP/CL with any issues they may encounter while studying at the college such as finance, accommodation, transport, childcare, counselling service referral and signposting to external agencies and partners.

The advisors also give advice on progression routes and pre-exit strategies. This is advertised through websites, leaflets, summer school, induction, course handbooks and is shared with all external contacts.



Reflective Questions:

The designated member of staff should also be the point of contact for other staff within the organisation

- How is the name/contact details of the designated member of staff communicated to all other staff?
- How easy is it for staff to raise and discuss issues with the designated member of staff?
- Are LAYP/CL items regularly on all teams' meeting agendas? Does the designated member of staff provide input at these meetings?

At many colleges the designated member of staff is responsible for delivering training to other staff members, or offering drop in sessions. This enables staff to become familiar with the designated person and comfortable asking questions and seeking support.

Good practice examples for Key Point of Contact and Advisor throughout the duration of the learner's course

- At **Forth Valley College** there is a Learner Adviser in each campus, on a duty rota, to support LAYP/CL with any issues they may encounter while studying at the college such as finance, accommodation, transport, childcare, counselling service referral and signposting to external agencies and partners. The advisors also give advice on progression routes and pre-exit strategies. This is advertised through websites, leaflets, summer school, induction, course handbooks and is shared with all external contacts
- At **Belfast Metropolitan College**, the Head of Student Support is the single point of contact within the college for the management of queries into the progression of LAYP/CL. This post is supported by a learning support officer assigned to LAYP/CL, who is the single point of contact in terms of the operational support and guidance.
- For more information on good practice view: **A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.**

Guidance for Ensuring Financial Support for the Learner is in place throughout their time at the organisation

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current arrangements for ensuring that financial support for the learner is in place.

- Work with the local authority and other appropriate partners.

Ensure that individuals of all ages are aware of any additional financial support offered by the organisation and how to access it (e.g. Bursaries, grants, hardship fund, benefits).

Agree arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment if required with the learner, in particular where their status or situation changes, (e.g. when they leave care or turn 19).

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

Work with the local authority and other appropriate partners

- Do you have comprehensive information about the financial support that the local authority and other partners can offer to a LAYP/CL throughout their course? How do you ensure this is kept up to date?
- Who is responsible for engaging with the local authority and local partners? Have they received training?
- Who are the relevant local partners other than the local authority?
- What contact do you already have in place? How can you build upon this?

East Kent College stresses the importance of ensuring that staff are in regular contact with local partners. This enables them to build relationships and keep up to date with any changes.

NPTC Group found that negotiation with social workers about the provision of financial support was helpful.



Reflective Questions:

Ensure that individuals of all ages are aware of any additional financial support offered by the organisation and how to access it

(This will enable LAYP/CL who choose not to disclose, to access financial support available to other learners).

- How are all learners made aware of the financial support that may be available?
- Upon applying for financial support, are learners given opportunities to disclose that they are from a care background?
- Are the aims of the approach successful (e.g. does it have a positive impact on retention figures)?
- Are LAYP/CL that have been identified, but have not claimed support, followed up?

Colleges report that for some LAYP/CL it is the bursary or other financial support that persuades them to stay in education; without the bursary, they could not consider a college place.

Some colleges pay travel expenses through purchasing bus passes so that transport costs can be covered.



Reflective Questions:

Agree arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment if required with the learner, in particular where their status or situation changes

- Are there specific times/stages post enrolment when LAYP/CL need specific support? For example, during holidays or when on work experience?
- What support is in place post enrolment?
- Why have these approaches been chosen? Do they secure positive impact for learners? How do you know?
- If learners don't initially require continuing support, do they know how to access it if their needs change?

It is important to ensure that any gaps in support are covered, such as through the holiday periods, as this can help ensure that learners return to complete their course.

Wakefield College and other institutions in the West Yorkshire network have found that providing lockable storage for some students can make a big difference if the students have nowhere safe to store their belongings.

Good practice examples for Ensuring Financial Support for the Learner is in place throughout their time at the organisation

- **Northbrook College** recommends that the bursaries should be well-organised, and put into place very quickly; access to money is key in enabling a young person to attend college.
- At **Forth Valley College**, LAYP/CL on both FE and HE courses can receive childcare support paid from discretionary funds. Lone parents are awarded 100% of their childcare costs. Students who have a partner will have their costs of childcare means-tested against their household income.
- LAYP/CL should receive information on financial and childcare assistance via e-mail, specific leaflets, through Learner Adviser support, summer school sessions, induction, website and their course handbook.
- It is important to ensure that any gaps in financial support are covered, such as through the holiday periods, as this can help ensure that learners return to complete their course.
- For more information on good practice view: **A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.**

Guidance for Other Support on Offer for LAYP/CL

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your other support for LAYP/CL.

- With the consent of the learner, agree a protocol for the sharing of information about the learner with the responsible local authority/Health and Social Care team, including continuing contribution to the Pathway Plan.

Provide learning support where required.

Ensure learners have access to pastoral support.

Where required, provide support for learners in need of emergency or long-term accommodation.

Provide impartial information, advice and guidance relating to further learning, or progression routes into employment and where relevant offer transition support.

Awareness raising of available support to foster carers and their involvement in decision making.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

With the consent of the learner, agree a protocol for the sharing of information about the learner with the responsible local authority (and other organisations), including continuing contribution to the Pathway Plan

- Is there a protocol in place?
- Have LAYP/CL had an opportunity to influence/shape the protocol?
- How often is the protocol reviewed? Are LAYP/CL involved in the review process?
- How do you ensure that information is recorded in the young person's Pathway Plan?

Belfast Metropolitan College developed a proactive working relationship with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in support of their LAYP/CL. The Trust and the College have regular meetings to review the educational pathways of individual LAYP/CL.

One crucial success for **NPTC Group** has been continuity - many of the relevant staff in the local authority and elsewhere have been working with the college for some time and know each other well. It is clear that college staff are able to follow up with known social workers, and are able to avoid the delays that would have occurred previously - this makes for successful interventions.



Reflective Questions:

Provide learner support where required

- Who identifies the need for learner support and how – learner/learner staff?
- How is the support offered and by whom?
- What specific support is available?
- How often are learner support arrangements reviewed for individual learners? Are learners involved in this process?
- Does the designated member of staff/mentor regularly talk to LAYP/CL about the learner support that is available?

All learners should be able to access learner support, but some need extra input from the outset; best practice ensures that every learner, including those from care leaving backgrounds, are aware of what learner support is and how to access it.

For some colleges weekly contact seems to work best but others find it more effective to meet less frequently unless the young person seeks out support to meet a specific need, such as difficulty completing an assignment.



Reflective Questions:

Ensure learners have access to pastoral support

- What pastoral support is available for LAYP/CL?
- How are LAYP/CL made aware that pastoral support is available? How are tutorial and academic/subject staff made aware of the pastoral support available?
- How is a learner referred for pastoral support and by whom?
- Are there processes in place to ensure learners are aware and can access this support prior to reaching crisis point?

At **East Kent College** many LAYP/CL have been identified as experiencing mental health difficulties, including depression and anxiety. Difficulties may emerge before the start of the programme, but often come to light later, and the college response relies on access to effective and quick referral routes.

To properly support LAYP/CL, **East Kent College** has excellent relationships with external agencies, and it is by working together that they can arrive at solutions to support the young person most effectively. College support staff are critical to successful support, especially during the transition period



Reflective Questions:

Where required, provide support for learners in need of emergency or long-term accommodation

- Are staff and LAYP/CL aware of the accommodation support available?
- How is a learner referred for accommodation support and who should make the referral?
- Are there processes in place to ensure learners are aware and can access this support prior to reaching crisis point?

Providers may need to factor in the impact of independent living and / or young parenthood on LAYP/CL's performance in provision they are attending.

It is reported that a particular time of difficulty is the end of the second year of college, when a student is leaving but cannot yet take up other accommodation; having nowhere to store belongings is just one of the many problems if the only accommodation available is a hostel.



Reflective Questions:

Provide impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) relating to further study, or progression routes into employment and where relevant offer transition support

- Do staff responsible for 1:1 IAG/progression interviews have training/knowledge of the specific needs and experiences of LAYP/CL?
- Is tailored support/IAG available for LAYP/CL? Are specialist external agencies such as Careers Wales, Voices from Care Cymru, and the Who Cares Trust involved in providing this?
- Are exit interviews offered? What processes are in place for improving IAG, based on feedback from LAYP/CL?
- Does the organisation gather destination data for LAYP/CL?

East Kent College sees its internal information, advice and guidance provision as absolutely critical in supporting the progression of LAYP/CL. This is supported through strong ongoing contact with all networks and results in positive outcomes for LAYP/CL. Progression meetings are held with relevant stakeholders.

While most organisations have and make good use of their internal guidance and advice staff, a solid relationship with the local careers/guidance services is also vital.



Reflective Questions:

Awareness raising of available support to Foster Carers and their involvement in decision making.

- Is there training or support available which would help foster carers achieve better relationships with organisations? This could include Confidence Building or Assertiveness training to enable them to communicate with professionals more effectively.
- Are foster carers involved in the developing and regular informing of the Personal Education Plans of LAYP/CL?
- Are staff at your organisation encouraged to attend activities run by local foster carer groups and make use of information provided by foster carers?
- Are Foster Carers able to participate in discussions with tutors and other professionals to help decide the support and best use of grants available to LAYP/CL in their care?

"64% believed that additional support would help foster children with their education.....

.....Participants said they would like help and advice so they could support children with their education at home."

Fostering Network's report of the consultation to identify what foster carers in Wales say they need to enable the Young People in their care to progress with their education - 2015 Full report available <here>

Further information should be offered to foster carers. Topics should include their rights and responsibilities in relation to their child's education, how a School/College or Training Provider works, and the support available to them.

There is a need to improve LAYP/CL and Carer confidence, skills, and attitudes.

Good practice examples for Other Support on Offer for the Learners

- **Peterborough Regional College** has a LAYP/CL strategy to continue to raise learner success rates, raise learner outcomes and progression rates into FE, HE and employment.
- The College monitors the attendance of the LAYP/CL. A weekly attendance report goes to the local authorities/social workers/personal advisers who will make contact with the young person if attendance is low and arrange a meeting to discuss this and to action support if required.

covering typically one year of basic study – such as study skills, literacy and numeracy as well as a wide range of other programme offers and tasters. These courses support LAYP/CL who missed out at school and provide a solid basis from which they can access a formal mainstream programme .

- For more information on good practice view:
A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.

- Many organisations provide a pre-entry course

4

MONITORING OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

You can explore the self-assessment and monitoring guidance for each section by selecting



Monitoring Outcomes

Monitoring Impact

Guidance for Monitoring Outcomes

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current processes for monitoring outcomes.

- The organisation's senior management endorses an organisational-wide strategy to support LAYP/CL and the development of the provision for this cohort. This includes a clear policy, retention strategy, awareness and culture across the whole organisation.

A senior member of staff oversees the implementation and monitoring of the commitment across the organisation.

Collect data about LAYP/CL on application, on enrolment and on the course and establish processes to measure retention and success of LAYP/CL and review regularly.

Measure outcomes of improved support within the organisation.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

The organisation's senior management endorses an organisational-wide strategy to support LAYP/CL and the development of the provision for this cohort. This includes a clear policy, retention strategy, awareness and culture across the whole organisation

- Senior management support is vital, do you have it? Who from and what does it look like in practice?
- What data is reported to senior management and board members about provision and outcomes for LAYP/CL?
- How are LAYP/CL included in policies and organisational strategy?

As well as endorsement by the senior management for an organisation-wide strategy, it is important that all staff are aware of the challenges faced by LAYP/CL and what kind of support will help, from the senior team, to managers, tutors, support staff and staff responsible for buildings and premises.

Robust methods of monitoring and evaluating the impact of those strategies and the interventions put in place are crucial in terms of reviewing success and identifying impact on learner retention and achievement.



Reflective Questions:

A senior member of staff oversees the implementation and monitoring of the commitment across the organisation

- Who is this member of staff and why have they been selected? Are they the most appropriate person?
- What is their actual role in overseeing and how do they do this?
- What are the follow up processes and have they been successful so far?
- How is the responsibility embedded in the reporting structure of the organisation?

Staff at all levels require active support from senior management. It is important for key messages and guidance about inclusion and diversity to be clearly communicated to all staff, from the very top of the organisation. Active support from senior management - frequently at assistant principal or assistant director level - can add considerable weight to an initiative to support LAYP/CL.



Reflective Questions:

Collect data about LAYP/CL on application, on enrolment and on the course and establish processes to measure retention and success of LAYP/CL and review regularly

- What data is collected and is it comprehensive?
- How is the data collected? (for example, through formal information sharing arrangements with the local authority.)
- How is data used to evaluate impact on approaches and how does it influence further development?
- How is data collected on reasons for drop out or other non-completion of course?
- Are there official links with local authorities and Careers Wales for the tracking of vulnerable and at-risk learners? This is identified in the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework which can be found [here](#).
- How is risk of drop out identified early and managed?
- What support is offered to those at risk of dropping out and for those who have dropped out?

Organisations which have flagged LAYP/CL learners within their mainstream data rely on this for measuring retention and success. This monitoring is either fed back at regular meetings with the learner, or, if anything unusual arises this would trigger a meeting with support staff.

² Please note, all young people have the right not to disclose looked after/care leaver status should they not want to, and all information should be handled sensitively with a view to current data protection requirements of the organisation

[Click here for some suggestions of indicators that can be collected](#)



Reflective Questions:

Measure outcomes of improved support within the organisation

- How is the support available to LAYP/CL measured? How is the impact of the support measured? How often does this take place?
- Are there reporting procedures in place to senior management about the effectiveness of support for LAYP/CL, as part of the organisation's regular reporting cycle?
- Is information on improved support included in reports to external inspectorates (e.g. Estyn)?
- How is the organisation's approach explained to external stakeholders?
- Is this included in annual committee papers to senior management and board members?

Following the collection of data on enrolment numbers, and achievements of LAYP/CL, organisations can identify good outcomes specifically for these LAYP/CL. Qualifications achieved and destinations can then be measured against national averages for LAYP/CL and other young people.

Good practice examples for Monitoring Outcomes

- At **East Kent College** a key driver is the Principal who is passionate about supporting and meeting the needs of this group of student's, as well as other vulnerable groups. He chairs a steering group in the county called the Care Leavers Progression Partnership (CLPP). This group also has links to the other Kent colleges and universities, virtual schools heads across Kent and Medway, third sector organisations such as Catch-22, Jobcentre Plus and a range of other stakeholders.
- **Uxbridge College** has improved it's data collection processes and can therefore report more effectively on progression data at the end of every year; a report is made to the governors' meetings.
- The Stoke Learner Support Agreement has been developed with **Stoke's Virtual School partners** since 2012. A range of providers in Stoke (FE, VI Form and training providers) have signed up to it. It has been so successful that it is now being developed as a West Midlands document by 5 local authorities. This approach has improved the education, training and employment outcomes of care leavers in Stoke by 15% and it has prevented any young person being universally removed from provision for over three years now.
- For more information on good practice view: **A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.**

Guidance for Monitoring Impact

The reflective questions and good practice examples  in each of the areas below will enable you to review your current process for monitoring impact.

- Collect feedback from LAYP/CL and work with the Student's Union/Learner Association to evaluate the quality of the learner experience and the impact of procedures upon them.

Offer mandatory awareness raising training for staff across the organisation and ensure all relevant staff have a more in-depth understanding of the needs of LAYP/CL leavers.

Share best practice with colleagues, for example through local and regional networks and national organisations.

Good practice examples



Reflective Questions:

Collect feedback from LAYP/CL learners and work with the Students Union/Learner Association to evaluate the quality of the learner experience and the impact of procedures upon them

- What approaches do you use to gather LAYP/CL's feedback on their experience and the impact it has on them?
- How is the feedback data that you collect used? Can you identify changes in support/provision as a result of feedback? How do you communicate changes that you make with LAYP/CL – particularly those who provide feedback?
- Are your learners involved in workshops or focus groups to gather feedback and evaluate the impact of organisational procedures on LAYP/CL (these could be through Student Unions, learner associations or 3rd sector organisations.)?
- Are these activities part of your comprehensive learner involvement strategy as outlined in Welsh Government Guidance for lifelong learning and skills providers in Wales here?

It is important that providers develop good relationships with the Student Union/Learner Association as this is an ideal way of collecting feedback on the Learner experience and of finding ways of supporting LAYP learners. Student Unions can offer effective formal, informal and peer-focused support to learners, which is often effective in breaking down barriers and enabling LAYP/CL to feel as though their voices are heard and their views matter.

Like many colleges, **Forth Valley College** runs focus groups for gathering feedback from LAYP/CL. Other colleges circulate questionnaires or have regular informal conversations and 1:1 meetings. This enables them to constantly review the impact of the support offered to LAYP/CL.



Reflective Questions:

Offer mandatory awareness raising training for staff across the organisation and ensure all relevant staff have a more in-depth understanding of the needs of LAYP/CL learners

- How does training around the needs of LAYP/CL fit into the broader CPD framework for all staff (e.g. Inclusion in probationary or induction training of staff)?
- Are there regular organisational wide updates/ awareness raising events?
- How can staff access further training or support, if the need arises? Do they know who to contact?
- Is the impact of staff training and awareness raising activity evaluated and reviewed?
- Are LAYP/CL involved in planning or delivering staff training sessions directly or indirectly through organisations such as Voices from Care for those students not comfortable taking part or not wanting to disclose their status?
- Are there joint CPD opportunities in place with local authorities or schools? For example, providers could develop opportunities with Looked After Children Education (LACE) coordinators or 'Responsible Teachers' in schools.

Profile Development and Training in **East Kent College** offer a certified online course to support educational and social care practitioners to improve the outcomes for LAYP/CL. 'Supporting Young People Leaving Care in Post-16 Education (QCF) Level 3 qualification to enhance and recognise the skills and knowledge of the 'Designated member of staff' responsible for LAYP/CL.

Dumfries and Galloway College had particular success with 'roving breakfasts' where the staff with responsibility for LAYP/CL went to each department with breakfast rolls and coffee at the start of the day to ensure that all staff were briefed with a good understanding of the needs of LAYP/CL.



Reflective Questions:

Share best practice with colleagues, for example through local and regional networks and national organisations

- Which aspects of your provision is particularly effective? How do you capture and share this – for example, through case studies or learner testimonies?
- What local and national organisations and networks do you already have links with, to support your provision for LAYP/CL? Are there any particular gaps? Are there other local networks and groups, that you can link up with?
- Do you have opportunities and mechanisms to learn from best practice in other organisations? How can you apply this to your own organisation?

In Wales there is a college/university network called CLASS CYMRU (Care Leavers Activities and Student Support Cymru). The network meets regularly to develop collaborative approaches to address the needs of LAYP/CL entering further and higher education, identifying potential barriers facing these students, and sharing good practice.

Good practice examples for Monitoring Impact

- Many organisations play an active role in networks; for example **Wakefield College** reported positively about the network HEART (Higher Education Access Rewarding Transforming) they are involved in, which works across West Yorkshire. This network includes specific work to support LAYP/CL and foster carers and includes HEIs and FE colleges along with local authorities and other stakeholders. This kind of forum represents an excellent method of sharing good practice and developing better relationships across the many agencies whose work needs to be coherent and where possible jointly co-ordinated.
- Organisations that were involved in the Buttle UK Quality Mark process collected data via an annual statistical return. This return gave an illustration of the characteristics of the LAYP/CL being supported and what support is being provided.
- For more information on good practice view: **[A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK Quality Mark.](#)**

5

LEARNER VOICE AND USEFUL LINKS

You can explore the sections below by selecting



What the learners say

Useful links



Learner Voice:

"My personal tutor is great but even more important are the 'Student support team' – without them I wouldn't still be coming to college."

"I feel that I have always got someone to talk to in college if I am not ok and I know I won't be judged."

"My Personal Advisor really helped with big things like the interview and little things like getting a bus pass to get there."

"They have supported me through finance, helping with paying off my debts... getting me into work as a student ambassador; just being there and listening and always making me feel reassured."

"If we find out that there's another student in our position we send them to talk to the team."

[Click to view video](#)



[Click to view Alice's Story](#)



For more learner stories please visit the 'Inspire me' application



Case Study:

Alice's Story

Alice went to her local further education college to do her A Levels in English, Media and Religious Studies. Alice struggled to make ends meet financially and stated that her further education college did not give her adequate support. She received no help with choosing a university or with her personal statement and she feels this resulted in her receiving only one offer, which she accepted at her local university.

Alice was misinformed by her social worker who advised her not to take out a student loan to avoid getting into debt. The local authority instead advised Alice to use the combined amount of the grants and bursaries to cover the university tuition fees. She used the full amount of the grants (about £2900) and the bursary from her university to cover the full cost of her tuition fees. This left her very little to live on, just £78 a week and she never settled due to financial and personal issues.

"I was being bullied by someone there and wanted to be moved. When I went to Student Support they said 'come back if it gets any worse'. I remember walking out from that meeting thinking, I have to leave because I don't know what else to do".

Alice did leave and chose another university further afield, requiring her to move. Her social worker provided good

support in helping Alice move, applying for funding costs for a removal van. However, when she was in her first year at the new university her financial issues continued.

"Student Finance was not helpful and told me I wasn't entitled to anything despite sending all the relevant information about my personal circumstances. I was trying to live on what the local authority was giving me, but I couldn't. I had to make choices between buying a book that I needed and eating. I couldn't socialise with my peers so I found it difficult to develop friendships and settle in. I never lived the full student life in the first year because I couldn't afford it until the Student Support Team [at university] helped me".

In her new university, student support services helped her sort out her finances, liaising with Student Finance and she settled well into her studies. They also recently helped her in her applications for employment.

"Without their support I wouldn't be where I am today. I got a First (class of degree) and I can honestly say there is a direct correlation between the grade I got and the support I received".

(Taken from the Buttle UK QM report by York Consulting LLP in 2013)



Useful links:

Welsh Government Strategy - Raising the ambition and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales

Supporting Care Leavers in Further Education - A guide to good practice in colleges achieving the Buttle UK quality mark - NIACE Report 2015

Learning and Work Institute - Inspire Me! application

Children's Commissioner for Wales – My Planner App

CASCADE – Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre

Buttle UK Quality Mark

Student Finance Wales

Careers Wales

The Who Cares Trust

The Fostering Network

Action for Children

Voices from Care Cymru

CASCADE - 'Understanding the educational experiences and opinions, attainment, achievement and aspirations of looked after children in Wales' - research outcomes



Suggested indicators that can be collected:

Section 1 – All Learners.

- **How many learners were active at the organisation during the last academic year? (This should collect all learners not just LAYP/CL)**
- **What is the total number of learners who attended a course in the last academic year that you can identify as LAYP/CL?**
- **How many LAYP/CL can you identify as having started a course in the last academic year?**
- **How many LAYP/CL can you identify who achieved their learning aim during the last academic year?³ (i.e. Completed units towards a qualification or completed their actions on an individual learning plan.)**
- **How many LAYP/CL can you identify who succeeded during the last academic year?³ (i.e. gained the qualification that they set out to achieve.)**
- **How many LAYP /CL considered themselves to have a learning difficulty, disability or health problem in the last academic year?**

³ These indicators can then be benchmarked against the same indicator for other non-LAYP/CL learners at the organisation. These indicator results can be used to evaluate provision and identify successes and where improvements could be made.



Suggested indicators that can be collected:

Section 1 – All Learners (cont)

- How many LAYP/CL were studying at each of the following levels during the last academic year?
 - a. CQFW pre-entry
 - b. CQFW Entry
 - c. CQFW Level 1
 - d. CQFW Level 2
 - e. CQFW Level 3
 - f. CQFW Level 4
 - g. CQFW Level 5
 - h. CQFW Level 6
 - i. CQFW Level 7
 - j. CQFW Level 8
- How many LAYP/CL were on provision with the following number of planned learning hours per week in the last academic year?
 - a. 0-15 Hours
 - b. 16-24 Hours
 - c. 25 Hours plus
- How many LAYP/CL gained qualifications at each of the following levels during the last academic year?
 - a. CQFW pre-entry
 - b. CQFW Entry
 - c. CQFW Level 1
 - d. CQFW Level 2
 - e. CQFW Level 3
 - f. CQFW Level 4
 - g. CQFW Level 5
 - h. CQFW Level 6
 - i. CQFW Level 7
 - j. CQFW Level 8



Suggested indicators that can be collected:

Section 2 – Learner support

- How many LAYP/CL accessed financial support during the last academic year?
- How many of these LAYP/CL were post-19 learners?
- How many specific LAYP/CL development activities for staff took place during the last academic year? (including activities that are part of new staff induction training).
- How many members of staff attended development activities to increase awareness of barriers to entry and success in education for LAYP/CL?
- How many staff attended training around LAYP/CL support needs in the last academic year?

6

SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

You can explore the sections below by selecting



Self-Assessment Template

Self-assessment Template: (Read only)

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1. Raising awareness and pre-entry outreach - Self Assessment						
Key indicators to quality of provision within the organisation	Examples of Current Practice	RAG assessment	Actions to take	Review Date	Review update on actions	RAG assessment
Sharing data and making available relevant information, advice and guidance about progression to and what study options are available:						
Ensure that outreach activities offered are accessible:						
Make available information on the organisation and the support available for study:						
Share information on learners with care experience and their support needs:						
Offer impartial pre-entry financial advice and information on support services:						
Collaborate with schools, FE, HE, work based learning and other organisations to make available information on study and support:						
Easily assessable web pages with specific information on support available and contact details of staff responsible for learners with care experience at the college.						
Widely assessable flyers and brochures with specific information on support available and contact details of staff responsible for learners with care experience at the college.						

Self-assessment Template: (Read only)

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2. Application, Entry & Induction - Self Assessment						
Key indicators to quality of provision within the organisation	Examples of Current Practice	RAG assessment	Actions to take	Review Date	Review Update on Current Practice	RAG assessment
Identify a designated member of staff to act as a key point of contact and advisor for looked after young people and care leavers, to provide support prior to and on entry:						
Have a place method of identifying learners from care and establish contact with them as appropriate:						
Ensure information on the full range of support offered to learners, their carers and professionals supporting them is readily available and easily accessible						
Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements:						
Offer transitional support before the courses starts to help learners and their carers feel comfortable with the institution:						
When determining the support needs for learners ensure that the individual's circumstances are reflected in the support offered:						
On enrolment ensure that learners are given opportunities to identify as having a care background:						
Ensure that staff supporting enrolment and interviewing learners have received training on the effects of having experienced care:						
Ensure that links with learners social worker / personal advisor / virtual school are established:						
Ensure help with applying for financial support is provided:						

Self-assessment Template: (Read only)

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3. On-going Support - Self Assessment						
Key indicators to quality of provision within the college	Examples of Current Practice	RAG assessment	Actions to take	Review Date	Review Update on Current Practice	RAG assessment
Ensure learners are introduced to the designated member of staff for LAYP/CL learners at the organisation and if appropriate mentors and other support staff.						
Ensure proactive support for LAYP/CL. Individual learners may not feel comfortable asking for support:						
The designated member of staff should also be the point of contact for other staff within the organisation:						
Work with the local authority and other appropriate partners:						
Ensure that individuals of all ages are aware of any additional financial support offered by the institution and how to access it:						
Agree arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment with the learner, in particular where their status or situation changes:						
With the consent of the learner, agree a protocol for the sharing of information about the learner and the responsible local authority/Health and Social Care team, including continuing contribution to the pathway plan:						
Provide learning support where required:						
Ensure learners have access to pastoral support:						
Where required, provide support for learners in need of emergency or long-term accommodation:						
Provide impartial information, advice and guidance relating to further learning, or progression routes into employment and where relevant offer transitional support:						
Awareness raising of available support to foster carers and their involvement in decision making						

Self-assessment Template: (Read only)

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4. Monitoring Outcomes and Impact - Self Assessment						
Key indicators to quality of provision within the organisation	Examples of Current Practice	RAG assessment	Actions to take	Review Date	Review Update on Current Practice	RAG assessment
Organisations senior management endorses an organisational-wide strategy to support learners from care and the development of provision for this cohort. (inc. A clear policy, retention strategy, awareness and culture across the whole organisation.):						
A senior member of staff oversees the implementation and monitoring of the commitment across the organisation:						
Collect data from the looked after young people and care leavers on application, on enrolment and on the course and establish processes to measure retention and success of learners from care and review regularly:						
Measure outcomes of improved support within the organisation						
Collect feedback from care-experienced learners and work with the Students Union/Association to evaluate the quality of the learners experience and the impact of procedures upon them:						
Offer mandatory awareness raising training for staff across the organisation and ensure all relevant staff have a more in-depth understanding of the needs of students with care-experience						
Share best practice with colleagues, for example through local and regional networks and national organisations						