

## Transition Support for Looked-After Young People and Care Leavers

The University has a suite of activities and approaches designed to support people from care backgrounds throughout the student lifecycle, including

- a residential summer school for high school pupils in S2 and S3 to encourage aspiration and attainment;
- a single named Care Advisor providing individual support and feedback for every applicant;
- development of a one-to-one mentoring programme for students from a care background to provide continual guidance and advice throughout their various transitions whilst at university.

### The Case for Support

Such transition support is essential and evidenced in the poor outcomes experienced by people who have spent time in care. Recent research by MCR Pathways suggests that just 2% of care leavers enter higher education. According to Fassetta et al. (2014), those from care backgrounds

- tend to leave school earlier (80% leaving at 16 or younger, compared to 30% of the general Scottish population);
- have fewer qualifications and lower attendance;
- run a higher risk of exclusion.

Our institutional data suggests that care applicants are much less likely to be made an offer than other students and, whilst the number of entrants has recently improved, retention remains a challenge.

### The Benefits of Transition Support

The transition support is designed to encourage confidence, success and participation at every stage of the learner journey. The S2 and S3 summer experience, for example, provides young people with an experience of university life and develops their understanding of the subject choices open to them and the entry requirements, thus aiding their transition into the senior phase of the Curriculum for Excellence and the process of application to university.

The Care Advisor's application support aims to smooth transition as students prepare for their new programme, arrange their finances and accommodation requirements. Close monitoring of retention and progression allows for proactive, timely engagement at the point where a student appears to be faltering in their transition to later years of study and to signpost opportunities such as internships to facilitate transition into employment.

### Additional Examples of Support

- University wide committee responsible for monitoring applications, retention and progression of students from a care background;
- Award of the Buttle UK Quality Mark in 'exemplary' category in recognition of the support we provide;
- Alongside MCR Foundation, Glasgow City Council and CELCIS, Strathclyde is a partner in MCR Pathways, a schools-based mentoring programme designed to support and inspire disadvantaged young people to realise their full potential through education.

- In development: project to recruit and train members of staff to mentor students from looked after backgrounds throughout their time at university;
- In development: project to offer earlier application support to young people in care.

Reference: Fassetta, G., Siebelt, L. & Mitchell, I. (2014). *Transforming lives: The first two years of the MCR Pathways mentoring programme*. Glasgow MCR Pathways.

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