Pathways to Further and Higher Education for Looked After and Care Experienced Young People

NORTHERN IRELAND

2017-2018
Pathways to Further and Higher Education for Looked After and Care Experienced Young People - Northern Ireland 2017 - 2018

Disclaimer: Please note at the time of writing the information contained in this document was correct. This may be subject to change.

This guide would not have been possible without the contributions from the following organisations:

- All Further and Higher Education Providers in Northern Ireland
- All Higher Education Providers in Northern Ireland
- Careers Service NI
- DfE
- DENI
- Fostering Network
- Homelessness Youth Support Network NI
- Student Finance NI
- VOYPIC
- HSCB
- Include Youth
- Student Finance NI
- Young People

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is written for professionals, carers and those supporting young people who are making choices about their future education and are considering Further and Higher Education. It is aimed at those who have an interest in promoting the wellbeing and educational attainment of young people in and leaving care in Northern Ireland.

The guide seeks to make explicit the roles and contributions of the various agencies that will be engaged in supporting a young person make plans for and access continued education. In particular it provides information on the various colleges and higher education institutions (CAFRE) in Northern Ireland and their particular arrangements for supporting looked after and care experienced young people. It also sets out, in an accessible, composite resource, information about pathways into continued education, the supports available, application routes and financial provision. It can be used as a reference guide by foster carers, guardians, kinship carers, social workers, 16+ advisers, careers advisors, and practitioners within the Further and Higher Education institutions.

Supporting young people into further or higher education requires the availability of up to date information in order to forward plan and to effectively assist young people to make informed choices. It is best that effective and timely planning takes place at the earliest possible stages. It is therefore hoped that this guide will make a helpful contribution to achieving this goal. Its development has been based on a shared commitment by the agencies involved to provide the highest standard of support to looked after and care experienced young people continuing in education through further education colleges and higher educational institutions.

The guide is the product of collaborative working across further education colleges, higher education institutions, the Department of Employment and Learning, the Department of Education, Health and Social Care, Voice of Young people in Care and Fostering Network in Northern Ireland.

KEY FINDINGS INDICATE:

- A higher proportion of care leavers aged 16-18 (15%) are coping with disability compared with the general population (6%).
- 14% of care leavers had a Statement of Educational Need compared with the general school population (5%).
- Three quarters of care leavers had GCSEs or other qualifications. The population of care leavers obtaining 5 GCSEs (A*-C) or higher was 25% which remains lower than for school leavers as a whole (79%).
- The proportion of young people leaving care with no qualifications was 26% in 2014 / 2015, over 15 times that for general school leavers.
- Of care leavers for whom information was available, three in five (61%) were in education or training, 8% were working and 31% were unemployed or economically inactive.

WHY EDUCATION?

“I owe a lot to my personal adviser. He believed in me and encouraged me when others just laughed at the notion of ambition. He guided and helped me apply. I’m really glad I’m here today meeting new friends and having some craic as well as studying!”

- ULSTER UNIVERSITY STUDENT

Education is a key driver towards achieving positive employment outcomes in adulthood. There remains a significant gap between the educational achievements of care leavers and their peers. This guide is a reference resource for those working with and supporting Looked After and care experienced young people to help them maximise educational opportunities and attain economic independence in adult life through employment.

The guide provides current information on the support available to young people in and leaving care that plan to continue further educational studies in Northern Ireland primarily. All further education and higher education institutions in Northern Ireland have contributed to the material contained in the guide and have set out the range of supports available.

Where a young person is seeking to undertake studies outside of Northern Ireland it is recommended that support staff and carers, in the first instance, establish the nature of supports available from the selected college or university. The guide contains a list of those that have acquired the Quality Mark (Buttle UK) in Appendix 3 which is an indicator of additional support being made available to young people leaving care. The support available and how it can be accessed should be well researched in advance as part of helping a young person to make choices and to prepare for his / her next educational steps. Support specifically available for young people leaving care should be fully maximised so that the young person benefits.
Helping children and young people in care to succeed in education, reach their potential and fulfill ambitions will make a major contribution to realising positive outcomes and to promoting their economic wellbeing in adult life.


Under Article 26 of the Order, Health and Social Care Trusts have a duty to promote the welfare of children in care. This includes their educational achievement.

Articles 34A and 35C of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002 set out the need for preparing pathway plans for young people in care when they attain 16 years of age. Regulation 7 of, and the Schedule to, the Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (NI) 2005 sets out the matters to be dealt with within the Pathway Plan which includes a detailed plan for the education or training of the young person. Personal Education Plans (PEPs) were introduced in 2011 for all Looked After children and are required to be developed alongside teachers and in place up to compulsory school leaving age.

The Pathway Plan which is a statutory requirement must be in place for Looked After Young People from aged 16 (post compulsory education) and includes a specific domain on Education, Training and Employment.

Together the PEPs and Pathway Plans focus on ensuring that children and young people in care and care leavers aged 16-21+ are fully supported to take full advantage of learning opportunities within education and throughout their care experience and beyond.

The Guide is primarily focused on looked after and care experienced young people aged 16-21+ years who have entitlement to the provisions of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002.

The Act defines these young people across four categories:

**ELIGIBLE YOUNG PERSON**
a young person aged 16/17 who has been looked after by a Trust for a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14 and is still looked after.

**RELEVANT YOUNG PERSON**
a young person aged 16/17 who has left care and before leaving care was an eligible young person.

**FORMER RELEVANT YOUNG PERSON**
a young person aged 18-21 (or beyond if, being helped with education or training) who, before turning 18 was either an eligible or relevant young person, or both.

**QUALIFYING YOUNG PERSON**
a young person aged under 21 who after reaching the age of 16, but whilst still under 18, was looked after by a Trust, accommodated in a voluntary children's home or privately fostered.

For each category specific duties and powers apply which are directed towards supporting the young person to make a positive transition from care and to achieve stability and economic independence in adult life.
The main provisions and entitlements as detailed in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002 are:

1. Each responsible Health and Social Care Trust has a duty to assess and meet the care and support needs of eligible, relevant and former relevant children;

2. The responsible Trust has a duty to keep in touch with all its care leavers who qualify under the Children (Leaving Care) Act;

3. All eligible, relevant and former relevant children must have a personal adviser;

4. The relevant Trust must maintain and accommodate relevant children;

5. The responsible Trust must assist a care leaver in full time further or higher education with vacation accommodation where required;

6. The responsible Trust must assist a former relevant child with costs associated with employment to the extent that his or her welfare requires it;

7. The responsible Trust must assist with the costs of education and training up to the end of the agreed programme;

8. The responsible Trust must assist a former relevant child to the extent that his or her welfare requires it, either in kind or exceptionally in cash.

In Northern Ireland there are five Health and Social Care Trusts who, under the Scheme for Delegated Authority, have the primary responsibility for discharging the duties and powers owed to looked after children and care leavers.

For the 16-21+ group of young people these responsibilities are fulfilled on behalf of a Trust through Family and Childcare 16 Plus Teams. These teams comprise of social workers and personal advisers who undertake the role of supporting young people in preparing for leaving care from age 16 through to after care up to age 21. The role continues beyond 21 where a young person is completing a course of education or a training programme.

The support provided includes:

- Provision of a named social worker/personal adviser to each young person.
- Completion of a holistic needs assessment for each young person at age 16. The assessment addresses a number of prescribed domains including education, training and employment.
- Completion of a Pathway Plan for each young person. Based on the needs assessment the Plan sets out how needs will be met, future goals and the means and timescales for meeting needs and achieving goals. The Plan includes a specific domain on Education, Training and Employment and where such needs are identified should make explicit the emotional, practical and financial supports to be provided.
- Arrangements for review of the Pathway Plan which must be undertaken on six monthly intervals or more frequently if required.

In order to effectively complete the needs assessment and fulfill aspects of the Pathway Plan, the social worker/personal adviser will, of necessity, engage with relevant others, for example, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive regarding future accommodation; the Careers Service to assist the young person with future career choices. Multi-agency working is a fundamental component of 16 Plus Transition Services given the range of needs that must be met for looked after children who are transitioning from care.

Establishing positive, constructive and sustained working relationships between 16 Plus Services, Further Education colleges and Higher Education Institutions is central to raising the aspirations of young people in care and to assisting them to engage in and maintain continued educational studies. It is therefore expected where a young person is pursuing educational studies that interface discussion will have taken place, involving the young person, student support services and 16 Plus staff or carers. These discussions should be aimed at helping the young person familiarise her/himself with the place of study, establish how best the young person can be supported to make a positive transition to further or higher education, how any barriers can be overcome and any difficulties that might arise will be communicated and resolved in a timely way.

An important aspect of preparing for further or higher education is ascertaining the financial means available to a young person. It is the role of the young person’s named worker, along with the young person and his/her carer, to set out a financial plan taking account of all sources of financial assistance that is available including the contribution from the Trust. This will make explicit costs, sources of income and assist the young person to understand budgeting implications and be reassured of the financial resources available to undertake the chosen course of studies.

Contact details for each Trust are in Appendix 1.
The Careers Service is here to help.

We provide an all-age, impartial, information, advice and guidance service, to help young people make informed choices about their future career paths.

Our professionally qualified careers advisers are based in Careers Resource Centres, Jobs and Benefits Offices and Job Centres throughout Northern Ireland.

A positive first step is to make contact with the Careers Service.

Phone
Call: 0300 200 7820 to speak to a careers adviser in your area.

Web
Visit the Careers Service website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/careers

The site also carries extensive information on education, skills and training.

Email
Email a careers adviser at: CSU8@economy-ni.gov.uk

Chat with a Careers Adviser Online
http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/chat-with-a-careers-adviser

What is career guidance and who delivers it?
Careers guidance helps an individual consider their skills, qualifications and experience, identify opportunities and develop achievable career plans. It will help analyse labour market trends and opportunities, make informed, appropriate and achievable decisions in relation to education, training and employment and help achieve personal career goals.

Careers advice and guidance is delivered throughout Northern Ireland by the Department for the Economy’s professionally qualified Careers advisers based in Careers Resource Centres, Careers Offices, Jobcentres and Jobs & Benefits offices.
Going to college or university is a really exciting opportunity. It enables young people to study an area of interest in a university or college of choice, experience a new place and make a new network of friends.

It is also an important step towards increasing independence, where young people have more freedom at college and university and more responsibility for themselves.

Further Education provides opportunities to go on to Higher Education at university or even in Further Education colleges as well as pathways directly into employment or training programmes.

Chapter FOUR

WHAT PROVISIONS DO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES MAKE FOR LOOKED AFTER AND CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE?

The focus on the educational progression and attainment of young people from a care background has increased significantly in recent years with greater emphasis placed by higher and further education institutions on proactively engaging and supporting this cohort of young people.

The Buttle UK Quality Mark for Care Leavers has played a significant part in establishing principles and minimum standards which have shaped university and further education provision and support to looked after and care experienced young people.

All of the universities and many of the colleges in Northern Ireland have attained the UK Buttle Quality Award which resulted in a structured, sustained approach to encourage and promote participation and uptake by care leavers.

Buttle UK ceased operation of the Quality Mark for care leavers in 2015 acknowledging that this cohort of young people were now recognised more properly and were being provided for within bespoke support and through the Widening Participation programmes.

Within Northern Ireland a culture and practice of supporting looked after and care experienced young people is well embedded across universities and further education colleges. A continued focus and emphasis is maintained through the Widening Participation strategy (Department for the Economy) and associated Widening Access Participation Plans and further strengthened through the forthcoming Programme for Government and through the Social Inclusion Project of the Further Education Strategy, Further Education Means Success.

This work is galvanised and supported through a multi-agency regional group on “Pathways to Further and Higher Education for Looked After and Care Experienced Young People”. The membership comprises of representatives from all colleges and universities in Northern Ireland, Department for the Economy, HSC Trusts, VOYPIC, Fostering Network and Include Youth and is hosted and facilitated by the Health and Social Care Board.
ACCESS TO SUCCESS is the Department for the Economy’s (DfE) regional strategy to widen participation in higher education among those groups which are currently under-represented, in particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds and including students from a care background. It was launched in September 2012 and has a strong focus on the creation of a more accessible sector in which the people who are MOST ABLE but LEAST LIKELY to participate are given every encouragement and support to apply to, and to benefit from, higher education. Significant progress has been made on a range of measures in the strategy.

THESE INCLUDE:

- the launch in March 2014 of “Reach Higher”, a single, centralised and co-ordinated higher education awareness and aspiration raising campaign to better communicate the benefits of higher education to under-represented sections of the community;

- work on the introduction of the “Reach” programme which aims to expand the range of aspiration and educational attainment raising programmes at school, college, community and the workplace;

- the introduction of Widening Access and Participation Plans – an amalgamation of Access Agreements and Widening Participation Strategic Assessments into a single document which is produced annually 12-18 months in advance of the proposed fee year. This includes a summary of the institution’s widening participation strategy and the groups it is targeting for interventions, a review of its past achievement against regional benchmarks and a detailed programme of anticipated progress each year towards the institution’s own targets.

Colleges and Universities in Northern Ireland should at least aim to provide the following to looked after and care experienced young people as a minimum standard:

**A NAMED CONTACT**

Every college and university with the Quality Mark has someone who is there to support looked after children and care leavers, both during the application stage and throughout their course.

**MONEY**

Specific financial support for students who have been in care - this might be a bursary (money to help students during their course which they don’t have to pay back), or advice about what extra funding they might be entitled to as a care leaver.

**ACCOMMODATION**

If students need help with where they are living while at college or university there is someone they can speak to. At university they will offer accommodation for 365 days of the year to care leavers.

**SUPPORT**

Someone to talk to about any worries or problems. Many universities offer peer mentoring schemes.

Each college and university offers lots more support for students with a care experience. Many will offer support during the application process, as well as advice on how to manage finances during the course. Some also offer taster days and many universities will offer summer schools and other events to get young people thinking about university.

It is important to remind young people when applying to university or higher education institutions through UCAS or who are making an application to a further education college to Tick The Box which asks if he / she has been in care. This will enable universities, higher education institutions and further education colleges to make contact with the young person at the application stage so that they can provide more information about the support available to the young person. If the young person’s application is made through UCAS, the young person should be encouraged to contact the University’s dedicated advisor who will guide the young person through any application process. Similarly the young person with the support of his/her worker or carer should be encouraged to make contact with the relevant FE college and dedicated contact within the college who is there to support the young person through the process.
WHAT IS FURTHER EDUCATION?

If the young person is over 16, he/she could consider enrolling at a further education college on either a full-time or part-time basis. The range of courses provided by colleges spans essential skills, a wide range of vocational and academic programmes at levels 2 and above and Higher Education programmes.

More and more pupils are choosing to go into further education and training to be recognised in industry and by higher education institutions. As well as the traditional A level route, the choices available include:

- Diplomas
- Apprenticeships
- Vocational Qualifications

Further education colleges are also important providers of higher education (HE) courses. Their availability of higher education provision in local further education colleges means that higher level courses are much more accessible for students throughout Northern Ireland. This work aims to develop distinctive learning programmes, respond to local demand, develop education and training in higher-level skills, widen participation, and increase the accessibility of Higher Education. Students can study a wide range of courses in various formats including Higher National Diplomas and Foundation degrees and full Honours degrees in Social Work.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FURTHER EDUCATION LEARNING?

There are six Further Education (FE) Colleges in Northern Ireland located across the region. Details of their location can be accessed through www.delni.gov/index/further-and-higher-education.

Each is committed to the promotion of a caring, supportive environment where staff and students can work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect, so that every student can achieve their full potential. There is a range of services provided to support students including robust safeguarding arrangements. The Buttle UK Quality Mark is awarded to FE colleges that demonstrate a commitment to young people in and leaving care.
FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND DEDICATED SPECIALISTS FOR CARE LEAVERS

BELFAST METROPOLITAN COLLEGE
is committed to opportunity, choice and excellence in education provision. Provision for the support of care leavers and care experienced young people is integral to the college’s widening participation strategy. The strategy aims to support care experienced young people by raising aspirations, by encouraging applications and by ensuring student support for progression, retention and successful outcomes.

We have a Learning Support Officer dedicated to ensuring that young people get the package of support they require to be successful in their studies.

DEDICATED SPECIALIST FOR BELFAST MET:

OONAGH MCGARRITY
PH: 02890 265108
EMAIL: OMcGarrity @belfastmet.ac.uk

Chapter FIVE
The NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE welcomes students from all backgrounds. We are committed to supporting students who are care leavers or who are currently in care. We work closely with Health and Social Care Teams within the Trusts to support and offer impartial guidance to care leavers and young people in care who want to attend the North West Regional College (NWRC) and achieve a qualification.

Before a young person attends NWRC we will:

- Offer the young person and his/her Carer/Social Worker a visit to the college to view facilities.
- Help students access additional support services including counseling, learning support, financial advice and careers advice and guidance.
- Give a named contact to support the young person with the application process and throughout his / her time at the college.

Named contacts help facilitate the smooth referral and transition of young people who may be considering Further Education as an option. We encourage Social Workers, Personal Advisors and Employability Workers to meet the college student support team.

The NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE welcomes applications from those who are currently in the care system, or who have left it. We work closely with the Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure that any students in this situation have as much support as they want to assist them with their studies.

All support packages are tailored to meet individual student needs. This support is monitored and re-assessed throughout the year by an allocated member of staff.

DEDICATED SPECIALIST FOR NWRC:
Shannon Doherty
PHONE 02871 278 709
EMAIL shannon.doherty@nwrc.ac.uk

DEDICATED SPECIALIST FOR NRC:
STEPHEN MCCARTNEY
PHONE 028 2563 6254
EMAIL stephen.mccartney@nrc.ac.uk
The SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE (SERC) recognises that the challenges facing looked after children and care leavers as enormous. Applying for and succeeding within Further Education can seem daunting to looked after and care experienced young people as they face the additional challenges of limited family support, financial disadvantage and sometimes struggling to find somewhere to live. At SERC we aim to help find solutions to these challenges and we encourage all looked after children or care leavers to disclose that they have experienced the care system. This information will be passed directly to the Pastoral Care Team who will then make contact with the young person to discuss their particular circumstances and the options available to them. All information will stay in strict confidence and will not be passed on without prior consent. We have dedicated Student Support Staff who can tailor any support required directly to a young person’s needs. Roger Duncan is the dedicated specialist for care leavers.

With a proud history of inclusion the SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE (SRC) continues to ensure that the quality of care and support for looked after children and care leavers offer the best possible opportunities for them to enter and continue on programmes of study at the College and make their aspirations achievable. Southern Regional College demonstrates a robust widening participation strategy to ensure that students from a care background can access a package of support – financial, pastoral and educational. The Southern Regional College recognises the challenges that young people leaving care face when entering a college environment and are committed to ensuring that we provide the support necessary to ensure they achieve their goals.

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DEDICATED SPECIALIST FOR SRC:

RAYMOND MALLON

PHONE 028 3025 9677
EMAIL mallonr@src.ac.uk

DEDICATED SPECIALIST FOR SERC:

ROGER DUNCAN

PHONE 028 926 77225 ext1710
EMAIL rduncan@serc.ac.uk
The SOUTH WEST COLLEGE is committed to ensuring that it provides a quality service and support to children in care and young care leavers. Learners have access to a dedicated Student Support team across the South West College including Personal Tutors, Pastoral Support, Financial Support, Learning Support and Careers. The college recognises that looked after children and care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group and is committed to ensuring that the quality of care and support it provides, at both the admission and enrollment stage, will enable them to enter and continue on their chosen career path.
There is a range of financial provisions available depending on the course of study, for example:

- Student Loans
- Student Grants
- Educational Maintenance Allowance
- Tuition Fees

Students do not have to pay fees if studying a Further Education (FE) course.

These course levels are:

- Level 2 Diploma
- Level 3 Diploma/Extended Diploma
- Foundation Art & Design
- NVQ Levels 1, 2 & 3
- City & Guilds Level 3
- NCTJ Level 3 Diploma in Journalism

If selecting to study a Higher Education (HE) course the payment of fees does apply in respect of:

- OCR Level 4 Diploma in Administration (Business Professional)
- Higher National Diploma (HND) & Foundation Degree

### PAYMENT OF TUITION FEES

Where tuition fees do apply as in Full-Time Higher Education (HE) Courses (e.g. HND or Foundation Degree) the Student Loan Company will provide a Tuition Fee Loan. Course Fees are listed in the course timetable provided. ELB grants include:

#### One: EMA

If the young person is a UK resident and under 20 years old on 30 June 2018, he/she can apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA).

Depending on entitlements a young person could receive up to £30 per week plus 2 bonus payments of £100 per year, for coming to college.

Visit [www.emani.gov.uk](http://www.emani.gov.uk) for further information.

#### Two: BUS PASS

**UK Residents Only**

If a student (on a full-time course) under 19 years of age on 1st July 2018 and lives more than 3 miles from the nearest College, he/she can apply for a Bus Pass.

#### Three: FREE SCHOOL MEAL ALLOWANCES

If a student (on a full-time course) has not attained the age of 18 years before the 31st July in the year the course commences and who fall into one of the prescribed categories, he/she can apply for free meals and a clothing allowance. Details and application forms are available from the Education Authority Regional Offices and Student Support Offices in local colleges.
four: FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) COURSES

The arrangements for applying for Further Education Awards have not changed with the creation of the Education Authority (EA). The Western Region, on behalf of the five regions of the Education Authority, offers a limited number of Further Education Awards each year for full and part-time courses for students undertaking courses up to and including Level 3. The closing date for applications for funding for full time courses is 1st September 2017 and 29th September 2017 for part time courses. Eligible students who submit an application by 30 June 2017 will be guaranteed funding.

It is important that application is made early to avoid disappointment. This form can be downloaded from http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-a-further-education-award/. Contact the Western region of the Education Authority for further information. 028 8225 4546 / 824121

five: HARDSHIP FUND*  
*A non-repayable means tested fund

The Colleges may provide help to students with evidence of financial hardship via the College Hardship Fund. UK Students who are aged 18+ may be eligible to get help with costs such as fees, maintenance, travel, accommodation, books and materials.

An application form can be picked up from the College Student Service/Support Offices.

six: CHILDCARE

Full-time students may be eligible for assistance with childcare costs. Applications can be made through the FE Awards or Hardship Fund. Details and application forms are available from the Education Authority Regional Offices and Student Support Offices in local colleges.

Application can be made directly to: www.studentinanceni.co.uk

seven: CARE TO LEARN

This is a support scheme which is available to students aged between 16-20 years old, where a young person may be eligible for full support for registered childcare whilst going to college to study. Application should be made to the Student Services at the young person’s College.

eight: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FUND (ASF)

This fund is to help support those with learning difficulties or disabilities enrolling on Further Education provision. Support can be provided based on individual need and can be either providing technical equipment or personal support. Those declaring a learning difficulty or disability will be assessed upon enrollment to determine the level and type of support required to participate in their course of study.

Colleges also receive funding to facilitate the provision of discrete classes specifically for students who, as a result of the nature or degree of their disability/learning difficulty, are unable to participate in mainstream provision. These classes would typically have fewer students and also permanent classroom assistants to provide the extra support needed.

Early application to local offices of the Education Authority is advised because forms are processed in the order they are received. Contact should be made with the relevant ELB to ascertain the closing date for application.

Regardless of whether the College has offered the young person a place on a course, an application should be made as the young person can change his/her course choice at a later date.

If applying for a FE course, please apply, using the FE Award Application and Assessment Form, to:

Student Awards Section  
Western Area,  
Educational Authority  
Hospital Road,  
OMAGH,  
County Tyrone,  
BT79 0AW
Choices Plus is open to lone parents throughout Northern Ireland who would like to return to training and education in their local area. Funded by the EU’s ESF programme and designed to complement government programmes, it offers support and bursaries to help with the costs associated with returning to study, including childcare, travel and course fees.

In addition, Choices Plus supports lone parents to progress towards employment by providing professional careers advice and guidance, work placements with local employers to gain experience, welfare rights advice incorporating “better-off” calculations, ongoing mentoring and support with job search, job applications and interview preparation.

Places are limited so we recommend that you apply as soon as possible. If you are interested in finding out more information please contact Avril on 02890231417.

Claire from Belfast was a participant on Choices Plus for one year while she completed the NEB Certificate in Dental Nursing.

She received help towards her course fees and childcare costs. After qualifying she secured part time employment at a local dental surgery.

She really enjoys being back at work and feels it has been beneficial for both herself and her children.

“ Choices Plus has opened so many doors for me; it was a big step for me moving back into work and without the support and financial assistance from the project I don’t think it would have been possible. It has made a definite improvement to myself and my children’s lives. Choices Plus is great and I would highly recommend it”

- CLAIRE FROM BELFAST

In line with Trust responsibilities to support young people in education the responsible Trust is required to undertake a financial needs assessment with the young person well in advance of embarking on his / her course of study. The financial assessment should clearly set out the expenditure and associated costs that will be incurred and the sources of funding available that will enable the young person to embark on and sustain the course of study. The cost calculator should take account of accommodation / rent, living allowance for food, service charges relating to accommodation, clothing, equipment / materials necessary for study, travel, field trips that may be associated with the course etc.

Where sources of funding external to the Trust do not meet the full costs of studies the Trust should make a grant payable to the young person to ensure that full costs are met and that there is no financial disincentive to the young person pursuing studies in further education. The Trust should maintain contact with the young person and have an understanding of the young person’s ongoing progress. Student Support Services within the FE colleges are a primary source of support for the young person and equally for staff and carers who are seeking to identify sources of financial and other forms of support for young people.

Such support should be maximised. Trusts should undertake to review the financial arrangements put in place for the young person on a regular basis.
College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)

There are three CAFRE campuses in Northern Ireland located in Enniskillen, Greenmount and Loughry.

CAFRE offers a range of student services including a Student Support Officer, accommodation, medical service, support for students with disabilities and counselling services.

CAFRE delivers a specific range of courses and specialist facilities across its three campuses:

CAFRE courses are designed to prepare young people for future employment. Lectures and tutorials are combined with practical sessions to allow application of learning to real situations.

CAFRE is “Small and Special”

CAFRE provide opportunities to progress on to higher courses. Details of further and higher education courses are available on the CAFRE website: (http://www.cafre.ac.uk/)

Two CAFRE prospectuses for FE and HE give information on entry requirements, range of courses, application process and progression on to higher education through to Foundation Degree or Honours Degree.

“You are treated as an individual at CAFRE. Staff are friendly and approachable and make sure that you are supported both personally and academically to achieve your potential”
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES AT CAFRE

CAFRE has a published document on “Further Education Financial Support for Students in CAFRE”, 2017/2018 which provides information on the financial help that the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has put in place for full time further education students for academic year 2017/18.

FINANCIAL HELP AVAILABLE:

**TUITION FEES**
Tuition fees for full time students on FE courses are paid in full by DAERA.

**HARDSHIP FUND**
This is available through CAFRE and provides help for students on lower income who may need extra financial support for their course and to stay in further education. Application forms are available from the campus and should be returned to CAFRE.

**CHILDCARE GRANT**
Assistance with childcare can be claimed if a registered or approved childcare provider / childminder is being used. Details of eligibility and the application process are available in the Financial Support for Students in 2016/17 publication or online at: [http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-a-further-education-award/forms-and-leaflets/](http://www.eani.org.uk/i-want-to/apply-for-a-further-education-award/forms-and-leaflets/)

**SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Application for support can be made where a student has a physical disability, a mental health difficulty, long term illness or specific learning disability. Contact should be made with CAFRE Student Support Officers for advice on the support available (Telephone Number: 028 9442 6861).

Financial Support for living expenses is means tested and available to students living in Northern Ireland. Students of any age on a full time further education course or a sandwich course at Enniskillen, Greenmount or Loughry Campus are eligible for a living expenses grant.

The **maximum** amount of living expenses available is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Expenses Grant</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student living in Campus Halls of Residence or in lodging</td>
<td>£2,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students living in parental home</td>
<td>£1,674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grant is usually paid in three instalments, one at the start of each term.

Application for financial support can be accessed through the Education Authority or CAFRE Admissions for a DAERA Further Education Award Application and Assessment Form. The form can also be downloaded from [www.eani.org.uk/feapplication](http://www.eani.org.uk/feapplication).

The completed DAERA FE Award Application and Assessment form should be returned to the Education Authority who will assess the application and send a Financial Assessment Notification to advise on the amount of award.
HIGHER EDUCATION COSTS:

Tuition fee costs for degree courses for 17/18 are £1,465 per annum for a full-time undergraduate course and approximately half that for the full placement year. Tuition fee loans are non means tested and available to cover tuition fee costs.

Application should be made to www.studentfinanceni.co.uk

There is a non-repayable grant which is means tested on household income. The maximum grant available in 2017/18 is £3,475, if household income is less than £19,203.

Application should be made to www.studentfinanceni.co.uk

A loan can be made available to assist with living expenses and is repayable on completion of studies; it is means tested.

Maximum and minimum amounts for 2017/18 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living at Home</td>
<td>£3,750</td>
<td>£2,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living in Lodgings</td>
<td>£4,840</td>
<td>£3,630</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As per the Regional Guidance Documents on Financial Support to Looked After and Care Experienced Young People in Further or Higher Education students who are Looked After are not expected or required to apply for a maintenance loan. Trusts are required to undertake a financial assessment with each young person based on an agreed cost calculator which expects Trusts to meet the assessed costs of enabling and supporting a young person through further or higher education costs, with the exception of tuition fee costs.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:
Other allowances available to provide extra help with living expenses depending on individual circumstances include:

- Parent’s Learning Allowance
- Childcare Grant
- Adult Dependent’s Grant
- Disabled Student’s Allowance

MAKING APPLICATION:
As soon as an application is made to CAFRE application for financial support should be made and should not be delayed pending the offer of a place.

Application can be made from March onward through the Education Authority at www.studentfinanceni.co.uk
ACCOMODATION:

Not all students live on CAFRE campuses however CAFRE does provide low cost on site accommodation with a range of amenities, laundry and recreational facilities. Priority for onsite accommodation is given to students under 18 years of age, students with special needs and first year students.

Costs vary depending on the type of accommodation allocated but fall within the region of £1,410 and £1,900. These charges include heating and electricity.

A catering package must be taken for those living in under 18 accommodation which costs in the region of £630-£960 per annum depending on campus.

Accommodation staff are available on each campus to offer advice and assistance:

- **Michelle McKenna**
  Enniskillen Campus
  028 6634 4832

- **Brian Simpson / Barry Kelly**
  Greenmount Campus
  028 9426 5501
  028 9442 6911

- **Judith Mullan**
  Loughry Campus
  028 8676 8139

Dedicated Specialists for CAFRE:

- **Student Support Officer:**
  Alison Young
  028 9442 6861
  Alison.Young@daera-ni.gov.uk

- **Student Finance Officer:**
  Karen Patterson
  028 9052 5572
  Ext: 25572
  Karen.Patterson@daera-ni.gov.uk
Higher Education (HE) is where a young person can study at an advanced level normally after turning 18 years old. In Northern Ireland there are five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Details of the specific institutions and respective locations can be sourced through https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/universities-and-colleges-northern-ireland.

Higher education courses are usually studied at universities, university colleges and Further Education Regional Colleges. However, some courses can be studied at specialist colleges, for example, agriculture, horticulture, food or equine studies.

If a young person does not think higher education is for him / her at the moment, it is not a problem, and it doesn’t mean he/she won’t be able to reapply at a later stage.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

Higher Education helps young people to develop qualities and skills that employers value. For this reason a higher education qualification can lead to better jobs, a wider range of employment opportunities, a more rewarding career and increased earning potential.

Higher Education also allows people to experience a rich cultural and social scene, meet different people and study something that people are really interested in.
St Mary's University College welcomes applications from students who have been looked after by their Trust/local authority in foster or residential care.

We offer a range of support for those leaving care or who have previously spent time in care. This support includes financial help, assistance with accommodation, access to counseling, careers and study skills support and the advice and guidance of a dedicated student support team.

Stranmillis University College currently offers care experience applicants and students a range of financial, pastoral and academic support for the duration of any of our 4 undergraduate degree programmes. These supports include, for example, an overall cash bursary of between £2,400 and £3,400 (depending on whether it is a 3-year or 4-year degree pathway); a full non-means tested year round free Halls Accommodation or equivalent; assistance with moving and transport between accommodation; pre-interview support; a pre-entry preparation course; and a dedicated care leaver co-ordinator available for confidential one-to-one support for the duration of the degree.
Ulster University encourages applications from students and will advise young people who have been looked after by their Trust / local Authority in foster or residential care. If a young person is leaving care or has previously spent time in care for three months or more and is thinking of applying to the University, there is a range of services and provision that Ulster University can offer. For example, we may be able to provide financial support, year round accommodation and advice and guidance from our Student Support Outreach Advisor.

Those full time undergraduates who meet this criterion are eligible for £1000 Care Leavers Bursary per year whilst studying at Ulster University.

Queen’s University, Belfast welcomes applications from prospective students who have experience of care and can provide a range of support as well as access to a dedicated contact during the pre and post entry stages. Queen’s has recently been awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark. The University provides a range of services to a young person who has been in Social Services or local authority care including: access to independent financial advice with the Student Financial Adviser, accommodation options with priority placements and 52 week contracts; a dedicated contact person who can liaise with University Schools on students behalf if they are experiencing any difficulties with their studies and access to counseling, careers and study skills support throughout their time at University.
As an open Higher Education Institution in every sense of the word, The Open University welcomes applications from care experienced young people. The UCAS process does not apply to The Open University. Instead, candidates simply enroll on our website - http://www.open.ac.uk/courses.

For most undergraduate degree programmes there are no academic entry requirements. However, there are diagnostic tasters which offer an opportunity for candidates to check their readiness for study at higher education level. Candidates may also initially register for an Access Module “test the water” and to see if distance learning suits them. Distance learning means that there is no need to move close to a university or college – students study at a time and place that suits them. Fee waivers are available to students on certain benefits or a low income to help with costs and our Student Registration Team will guide applicants through the application process.

The online eligibility checker will help candidates work out if they qualify for financial support: http://css2.open.ac.uk/fafcalculator/eligibility.aspx

- **Fee grant** – a means-tested grant of up to £1230 to help towards the cost of module fees. The amount awarded depends on income and the number of credits you are studying.
- **Course grant** – help towards study costs, like a laptop, internet access or travel to tutorials.

The exceptions are:
- St Mary's University College
- The Open University
- The FE Regional College

In the case of St Mary’s and the Open University applications for all courses must be made directly to the institution. In the case of the FE Regional Colleges a small number of courses are applied to through UCAS but for the majority of higher education courses application is made directly to the college. Application information can be obtained from each Regional College website.

**Entry Requirements**

Entry requirements are a guideline of the recommended academic ability the course provider expects the young person to have. Each course has different requirements – usually a mix of qualifications, subjects or exam grades they recommend the applicant to have or to be working towards. It is good advice to check when searching for courses. There is plenty of support in higher education for care leavers – with finances and accommodation - as well as supporting the young person in new surroundings.

**How do I apply to higher education?**

Application to higher education is usually through UCAS (http://www.ucas.com)

- UCAS stands for the ‘Universities and Colleges Admissions Service’.
- UCAS aim is to help students make informed choices that are right for them, guiding them, as well as their parents and advisers, through the entire higher education application process.
- UCAS processes over 2.5 million applications every year, for some 650,000 prospective students across the UK and beyond: helping them gain access to more than 340 UK universities and colleges.

We also run several specialist application services – GTTR (Graduate Teacher Training Registry), UKPASS (UK Postgraduate Application and Statistical Service) and CUKAS (Conservatoires UK Admissions Service).

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**UCAS is at the heart of connecting people to higher education with a mission to:**

“Create value for members through shared services; and deliver admissions services that help applicants make the right choices, for the right reasons and with the right outcomes”.

**The exceptions to the UCAS process are:**

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**View video link below:**

http://www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/explore-your-options/individual-needs/advice-care-leavers
If a young person normally lives in Northern Ireland he / she may be eligible for funding from Student Finance NI – a partnership between the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland, the Student Loans Company and the Education Authority in Northern Ireland. To get the funding, the young person and the course of study must be eligible for it.

See www.studentfinanceni.co.uk for further details.

*Special Support Grant*
The Special Support Grant currently pays up to £3,475 depending on household income and is intended to help with additional course related costs such as books, equipment, travel or childcare. In the main a care experienced young person will not need to be concerned with household income.

Entitlement is calculated in the same way as the Maintenance Grant but will not affect the amount of Maintenance Loan that a young person may be entitled to receive. Jobcentre Plus or the local authority’s Housing Benefit section will not take account of the Special Support Grant when assessing any claim made for income related benefits.

To apply, print off the Application Letter for Special Support Grant on Student Finance NI’s website or phone 0300 100 0077 requesting the form and send it to the local Education and Library Board (ELB) along with evidence.

**Evidence**
- a passport or birth certificate to prove age;
- a letter from the college or university;
- a copy of tax credit award;
- a copy of a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions which show receipt of benefit as a lone parent;
- a letter, on company header paper, from a professional person who knows the young person’s circumstances and can confirm that the young person is a lone parent.

A professional person can be, for example, a doctor, lawyer, teacher, police officer or minister of religion.

**Please note:** if the young person is eligible to receive a Special Support Grant he/she will not be eligible for a Maintenance Grant.

**HSC TRUST FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT**
In line with Trust responsibilities to support young people in education the responsible Trust is required to undertake a financial needs assessment with the young person well in advance of embarking on his / her course of study. The financial assessment should clearly set out the expenditure and associated costs incurred and the sources of funding available that will enable the young person to embark on and sustain the course of study. Where sources of funding external to the Trust do not meet the full costs of studies the Trust should make a grant payable to the young person to ensure that full costs are met and that there is no financial disincentive to the young person pursuing studies in further education. The Trust should maintain contact with the young person and have an understanding of the young person’s ongoing progress. Student Support Services within the HEIs are a primary source of support for the young person and equally for staff and carers who are seeking to identify sources of financial and other forms of support for young people. Such support should be maximised.
Students leaving the care of the Health and Social Care Trusts or local authority are classed as independent by Student Finance NI providing that they have not returned to the care of their parent(s). This means that their assessment of student support will not be based on the household income of their parent(s). As household income is not taken into account, single independent students will be entitled to the maximum Maintenance Grant. This is in addition to the other support available, such as loans for fees and living costs. The Grant does not have to be repaid.

**HOW MUCH WILL UNIVERSITY COST?**

Thinking about and clarifying financial options, such as tuition fees and living costs, are essential to assisting a young person to make a decision to go to university or college. There is a range of expenses associated with going to university, for example, tuition fees, accommodation and living costs. Each young person needs to know about the overall cost of being at university, sources of income, repayment implications and be assisted to work out a budget plan to fully understand how expenses will be covered.

**HOW MUCH CAN THE YOUNG PERSON GET?**

This will depend on where in the United Kingdom the young person decides to study. Universities and colleges in Northern Ireland can charge up to £4,030 for tuition fees in academic year 2017/18. The young person can get a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the full amount of tuition fees the university or college is charging, up to a maximum of £4,030 in academic year 2017/18.

- A young person can get a Tuition Fee Loan to cover all or part of the tuition fees.
- The young person needs to pay it back after he/she has finished the course.
- The young person will be charged interest on any amount borrowed.
- The money is paid directly to the university or college, not to the young person.

Universities and colleges in England, Scotland and Wales can charge up to £9,250 for tuition fees in academic year 2017/18. If the young person is studying in one of these countries, he / she can get a Tuition Fee Loan to cover the full amount of tuition fees the university or college is charging, up to a maximum of £9,250.

The amount the young person is charged may vary depending on the course or the university or college chosen to attend. Contact should be made with the university or college directly for more information.

**LIVING COSTS**

To help with the cost of accommodation, food, clothing, books, travel expenses the young person may be eligible for a Maintenance Grant or a Special Support Grant*, which does not require repayment and a Maintenance Loan, which must be paid back when the young person reaches a certain income bracket when in employment.

**MAINTENANCE GRANT AMOUNT AND MAINTENANCE LOAN AMOUNT**

Household income will not be applicable for care leavers, but may be included if the young person has a partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the total annual household income is:</th>
<th>The amount available is:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£19,203 or less</td>
<td>Full grant (£3,475)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Which can a young person get?

The Special Support Grant is based on your eligibility for income support or other means-tested benefits, such as, Housing Benefit. For example, if the young person:

- is a single parent
- has a partner who is also a student
- has certain disabilities

With the Special Support Grant (unlike the Maintenance Grant) the Maintenance Loan will not be reduced. Additionally, it does not count as income when working out income related benefits or tax credits.

**BURSARIES FROM UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**

Some universities and colleges offer bursaries depending on household income, the course of study or the tuition fee being charged. The amount a young person is entitled to receive can be different depending on the university or college.

Information on bursaries can be obtained from the institution’s Widening Access and Participation Plan for 2017/18 which is available on the university / college website. Alternatively, you can make contact with the university or college to find out more about the bursaries they offer.
EXTRA HELP

STUDENTS WITH CHILDREN OR ADULT DEPENDANTS
There are extra grants available if the young person has children or if there are any adults who depend on the young person financially. The young person would not have to pay any of these back.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
1. Disabled Students Allowances (Higher Education)
When a student with learning difficulties and/or disabilities applies for a Higher Education course they are encouraged to apply for Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) to help cover the extra costs of any support they may require throughout their course as a direct result of their disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. DSAs can help with the cost of non-medical support providers, major items of specialist equipment, travel and other costs. A student can apply at any time before or during their course, and the amount they can get does not depend on their income or their family income. This allowance does not have to be repaid.

2. Disability Needs Assessment
Through DSAs the Department for the Economy provides funding to meet the costs of a Disability Needs Assessment for each student who presents at the HE Institution with a disability. This is an assessment of the support needs of the student including their specialist equipment requirements and non-medical support provider needs.

3. Register of Support Providers
Through DSAs the DfE also provides funding to meet the administration costs of a Register of Support Providers in each of the two Northern Ireland universities. The Register of Support Providers is a unique service which provides one to one personal support to disabled students registered on recognised higher education courses at any of the colleges or universities in Northern Ireland. The Register maintains and develops a resource of freelance professional and non-professional support providers, who act in specialist roles to support disabled students. The student’s support needs are assessed, and the student is “matched” with the appropriate support provider(s). Support providers include audio-typists, note-takers, dyslexia coaches, study skills mentors, sign language interpreters and campus assistants. The Register offers support, guidance and training to those who deliver the non-medical helper support. The Register supports colleges and universities in meeting their duties under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (2005) (SENDO). SENDO means that colleges and universities have both anticipatory and reactive duties to accommodate the needs of disabled students by making reasonable adjustments. Where necessary these adjustments will include essential adaptations to student accommodation to meet the needs of disabled students.

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT
HOW AND WHEN THE YOUNG PERSON REPAYS
The young person will start to repay the loan from the April following the date the young person graduates or leaves the course.

The young person will pay 9% of anything earned over £17,775 (17/18) before tax per year. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period Applicable:</th>
<th>Annual Repayment Threshold:</th>
<th>Monthly Repayment Threshold:</th>
<th>Weekly Repayment Threshold:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/4/17 - 5/4/18</td>
<td>£17,495</td>
<td>£1,457</td>
<td>£336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the young person has an employer, repayment deductions will be taken directly from the young person’s pay slip. For more information refer to the section Repaying through Pay As You Earn (PAYE).

If the young person is self-employed, the young person will need to complete a self-assessment form and return it with any payment by 31 January following the relevant tax year.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE YOUNG PERSON LEAVES A COURSE DURING THE YEAR
If a young person leaves the course during the year the young person will pay back the following amount of the Tuition Fee Loan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you leave:</th>
<th>Tuition Fee Loan young person has to repay:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before you register for the course:</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the end of term 1:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the end of term 2:</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the end of term 3:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Empowering People in Care (EPIC) is an independent association that works throughout the Republic of Ireland, with and for children and young people who are currently living in care or who have had an experience of living in care. This includes those in residential care, foster care, hostel, high support & special care. EPIC also works with young people preparing to leave care and in aftercare.

If a young person is planning to study in the Republic of Ireland it is recommended that contact is made with EPIC’s advocacy advisors. http://www.epiconline.ie

**HOW TO APPLY FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE COURSE IN IRELAND?**

If a young person is applying to study in Ireland as an EU citizen, application for all undergraduate courses is through the Central Applications Office (CAO), unless otherwise stated. The CAO provides an application pack with a handbook, which lists all the courses on offer and information on how to apply to each one. Applications must be submitted online, which makes the process even easier.

This CAO Handbook gives information on application and admission procedures only.

http://www2.cao.ie/handbook/hb.pdf

Application should not be made for any course without first consulting the information literature of the institution offering that course.

**WHERE DOES CAO OPERATE FROM?**

The CAO Application System operates from the CAO premises at:

**ADDRESS**
Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway

**PHONE**
(091) 509800

**FAX**
(091) 562344

**OFFICE CONTACT TIMES**

Office: 09:00am to 1:00pm and 2:00 to 5:00pm

Telephone: 09:30am to 1:00pm and 2:00pm to 5:00pm

Monday through Friday

**WEBSITE**
www.cao.ie

Application may be made online on this website.
Chapter NINE

OUR VISION
All children in foster care enjoy the very best life chances and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

OUR MISSION
To improve the lives and life chances of children in foster care. We work with children and young people, fostering families and the services that support them.

WHAT WE DO:
Deliver services to children and young people that benefit them, make their voices heard and enable them to reach their potential
Promote foster care to ensure society understands, values and recognises how foster carers transform children’s lives
Influence policy and legislative framework so it supports and promotes excellence in foster care
Support fostering families and the services that work with them to provide the best possible care for children and young people

The Fostering Network gives advice to approved foster and kinship foster carers on practical and legal matters, finance and welfare benefits
Provides a 24 hour legal and stress counseling helpline

The Fostering Network

Who Care Leavers Organisations Support
FOSTERING ACHIEVEMENT SCHEME

The Fostering Network Northern Ireland delivers the Fostering Achievement Scheme which aims to improve educational attainment among children in care. Fostering Achievement has produced significant improvements in educational outcomes for children in care and shows that with the right support all young people can achieve their full potential.

The Fostering Achievement scheme funded by the Health and Social Care Board, makes direct educational provision to children and young people in foster care and each year provides tailored support to at least 1300 children and young people in foster care each year.

Examples of Fostering Achievement provision includes:

- One to one Tuition
- Driving lessons
- Sports lessons or equipment
- Educational materials
- Computer equipment

In addition to direct educational provision the Fostering Achievement scheme delivers a summer programme of activities to 200 young people, organises Achievement Awards in each of the Health and Social Care Trust areas as well as delivering the award winning Letterbox Club to all children in foster care and adopted children aged from 5 to 13 years.

PATHWAYS TO UNIVERSITY RESIDENTIAL SCHEMES

The Fostering Network work in partnership with Ulster University to deliver the Pathways to University Residential Schemes during the summer. These schemes are targeted at young people aged 15 – 17 years of age and the aim is to raise young people’s aspirations by giving them an opportunity to experience university life and encourage them to apply in the future. All young people who participate receive an OCN qualification on Understanding Higher Education. This scheme includes a range of activities to give young people an opportunity to learn about university and gather information to enable them to make informed decisions in the future. They experience student life for real, living in the halls of residence where they are responsible for their own budgeting and cooking during their stay and they can explore the social side of university with activities such as bowling and a movie night.

FOSTERING THE FUTURE PROJECT

Fostering the Future is an innovative new Fostering Network NI project funded by The Big Lottery’s Reaching Out Empowering Young People Programme which aims to work directly with foster carers and young people in foster care to meet their training, development and support needs.

The key areas of work for children and young people within the Fostering the Future project include combating negative life events, increasing self-esteem and self-confidence, developing skills and assisting with transitioning from child care to adult independence.

Tick the Box

The Fostering Network leads the “Tick the Box” awareness campaign which encourages young people who have spent time in care to tick the box on the UCAS form or on the FE application form stating that they have been in or are currently in care. This will enable them to get the extra support they are entitled to and may need while at university or in further education.

Address:
The Fostering Network,
Unit 10,
40 Montgomery Road,
Belfast,
BT6 9HL

Phone: 028 9070 5056
Email: ni@fostering.net
Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) is an independent Northern charity that promotes the rights and improves the lives of children and young people in care.

We listen and learn from what children and young people tell us about their experience in care to facilitate positive change in legislation, policy and practice.

We work in partnership with children, young people, staff, managers, agencies and government. Our core services include advocacy, group work, personal support and coaching, policy and research.

It is our pledge that we will work so that all children and young people...
Include Youth was established in 1979 and is an independent non-governmental organisation that actively promotes the rights, best interests of and best practice with disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

Include Youth works primarily with and for young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) and the organisation is focused upon three core areas of work:

one: influencing policy – particularly in the areas of youth justice and youth employability.

two: supporting other practitioners to develop more rights based policies and practice.

three: enhancing the employability of young people who are not in education, training or employment through the provision of employability training and support programmes.

The Give and Take scheme works predominantly (but not exclusively) with young people from a care background aged 16 to 21.

It is a pre-vocational employability programme which aims to improve the employability and increase the self-esteem and confidence of vulnerable young people who are not ready to participate in mainstream training and education.

These complex issues reflect the barriers articulated in DEL’s Pathways to Success Strategy and demonstrate that the young people engaged on Give and Take are amongst the most vulnerable and needy group of NEET young people. These barriers make it difficult for this group of young people to engage with mainstream education or training or to find employment. The complexity of issues and needs has implications on the model of support that can effectively be delivered to such young people.

Include Youth has developed a flexible, highly supportive programme which not only allows young people to remain engaged but sees them achieve qualifications, experience the world of work and begin to address some of the personal barriers that prevent progression.

The model of delivery is a flexible and young person centred, and is delivered by a dedicated and committed staff team of workers who adopt a Youth Work approach in their engagement with young people.

The service consists of five core components:

- Training and Qualifications
- Personal Development
- Work Experiences
- Volunteer Mentors
- Transitional Support

The Transitional support component is a recent development coming from the recognition that sustaining a positive move on to the next stage of a young person’s employability journey depends on support structures, available resources and the individual themselves. Young people who have been ‘NEET’ frequently do not have protective factors such as a stable home, adequate income, supportive relationships or confidence. Often transitions to mainstream providers are difficult for young people, who succeed at a pre-vocational scheme such as the Give and Take Scheme, only to experience a breakdown in their move on placement. In response to this Include Youth has decided to pilot a Transition Support Service.
SCOTLAND, ENGLAND AND WALES: RESOURCES ON SUPPORT FOR LOOKED AFTER AND CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE IN FE AND HEIs

**SCOTLAND**


**ENGLAND**


**WALES**

Further and Higher Education Guide for young people in and leaving care in Wales, Information for 2014/2015; South West Wales, Reaching Wider Partnership

CONTACT for Health and Social Care Trust Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRUST</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Trust</td>
<td>Hilary Walker</td>
<td>Fairview 1, Mater Hospital Site, 47-51 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 6AB</td>
<td>028 95041279</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hilary.walker@belfasttrust.hscni.net">hilary.walker@belfasttrust.hscni.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Trust</td>
<td>Julie Patterson</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:julie.patterson@northerntrust.hscni.net">julie.patterson@northerntrust.hscni.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Eastern Trust</td>
<td>Maurice Largey</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:maurice.largey@setrust.hscni.net">maurice.largey@setrust.hscni.net</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:liz.stevenson@southerntrust.hscni.net">liz.stevenson@southerntrust.hscni.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Student Awards Section</td>
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<td>BELFAST</td>
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<td>SOUTHERN (NORTHERN IRELAND)</td>
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<td>3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, ARMAGH, BT61 9AX</td>
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<td>WESTERN (NORTHERN IRELAND)</td>
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<td>1 Hospital Road, OMAGH, County Tyrone, BT79 0AW</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:student.awards@neelb.org.uk">student.awards@neelb.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>County Hall, 182 Galgorm Road, BALLYMENA,</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDUCATION AUTHORITY</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forestview, Purdy’s Lane, BELFAST, BT8 7AR</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@eani.org.uk">info@eani.org.uk</a></td>
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## APPENDIX 3

### Colleges and Universities with Quality Award Status in England, Scotland and Wales

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Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland

COLLEGES NORTHERN IRELAND (CNI) MEMBERS