

CEL CIS Education Forum – 18 March 2021

During the Forum meeting, we asked attendees to share examples of promising and good practice they were aware of around participation and access to further and higher education, and what barriers they helped overcome. These were our group responses.

Group A

- Local authority funded a More Choices More Chances staff member who linked with looked after attainment outreach team to provide support for looked after pupils accessing outreach teaching. This helped to identify young people and support / track their destinations.
- We have just received Children In Need Grant to employ an employability mentor for a year. He/she will work in partnerships with our teachers to develop Developing the Young Workforce across our school (age 6-16).
- I am the Corporate Parenting "Champion" for Skills Development Scotland in one local authority area and part of my role is raising awareness of care experienced children and young people and keeping staff aware of opportunities which may arise/be available. I am relatively new to the role but am currently arranging contacts with the local Universities and Colleges in regards to building relationships with Leads for care experienced young people.
- All Skills Development Scotland offices have a named local contact for corporate parenting. All staff in Skills Development Scotland have mandatory training, not just the staff that work directly with young people.
- All our school contact information for example our schools bulletin sent to all Scottish schools and all school presentations delivered. Making information available when attending careers conventions, college open day events etc.
- University working in partnership with Local Authority Partners and Throughcare and Aftercare services in planning transition support for care experienced students.
- University coordinate all services for care experienced students through our transitions coordinator, including financial planning, bursary, housing, welfare needs, referrals to health and wellbeing and work with all high schools and agencies to identify young people early in their journey.
- In one local authority are Skills Development Scotland have a direct service based one day a week in the social work office to provide support to young people accessing throughcare and aftercare support. Over Covid this has been on the phone.
- MCR Pathways resources available throughout school to help pupils reach positive destinations, as well as the support provided post-school, e.g. the opportunity for young people to remain in contact with their mentors (including meetings), resources available on support available, bursaries, scholarships, college support, accommodation, etc.
- A university providing transition support summaries to teaching staff so they understand some of the needs of young people struggling with transitions and also mandatory training at induction and through staff development days on care experienced students and their roles as corporate parents.

Group B

- Pre-COVID, one local authority offered 6 care experience young people the opportunity to obtain some work experience within the council. There was lots of support provided to the young people throughout the duration.
- A forum member was involved in a project pre-COVID, where he organised a job fair for care experienced young people. Reps from colleges, businesses and organisations attended. Each

rep was given a couple of minutes to speak to the young people. The job fair worked really well and a young person gained an apprenticeship from this.

- A forum member shared that she was involved with the organisation of tutors for care experienced young people in her area. This was not discussed with the young people at the beginning so there was some issues with young people's engagement. The organisation began to review this and created additional processes to ensure that engagement and communication with the young people is from the start.
- One member shared that she was involved in some project work with one local authorities children's houses; she linked with a young music student who during the 1 year she worked with her, had moved placement 4 times. The issue highlighted here is consistency for young people during their education. The change in placement would've meant a change to school 4 times in one year. This is not a normal thing for young people.
- One member shared that in her role as a residential worker, she has seen the benefit of schools being involved and visiting residential homes. For example, if a young person was not attending school, a school staff member would come and pay the young person a visit to try and encourage them to get back into school.

Group C

- Cutting through bureaucracy and stopping young people from having to tell their stories repeatedly
- Working to ensure that the 'evidence' required to prove that people are care experienced is not over onerous/ triggering/ a barrier to accessing
- Changing the narrative so that young people don't have to prove anything
- Negative experience of schools can frame future attitudes to education
- Plans can become meaningless and bureaucratic. How to make sure that they truly support young people especially in transition into Further and Higher Education
- Ensuring that plans are effective 'live' and retain meaning
- The importance of career skills
- A question about the challenge of corporate parents ensuring that young people access/are supported to gain career skills
- Giving young people agency and control
- Looking at young people through the lens of development rather than chronology
- Young people come back to formal education when they are ready.
- Informal learning v formal learning. The importance of doing both. No one body/person owns either e.g. the learning that might come from a gap year (resilience, career, broadening horizons)
- Theme of the challenge of corporate parents providing or replicating same/similar experiences to family like care without it becoming institutionalised.

Group D

- Really early discussion with care experienced young people (from S1 onwards) about College/University courses to help them realise that these are options for them and that the support will be available for them if they want to pursue this.
- Vocation Mentors have proved to be very successful but they need to be working with the young people for at least their last year at school.
- Continuing the important relationships developed during their time in care with those who have cared for them can provide significant ongoing support – a wider and more holistic approach and not education specific.
- Some local authorities have Inclusion Teams, which are mixed teams of Education, Social Work, Health, Community Learning and Development etc. They work together to support up to and beyond leaving school.
- Virtual School funding one full time coordinator and one support worker for Positive Leavers Pathways programme. Virtual School arranges and coordinates monthly meetings with children houses.

- Social Work, Skills Development Scotland and schools working together to raise aspirations. Colleges liaising with young people BEFORE and during the application process. Corporate parents and care workers emulating actual parents, tenaciously encouraging young people to continue with education.