

Care Experienced Governance Group Minute

The twelfth meeting of the Care Experienced Governance Group (CEGG) was held on 13th June 2019 at Apex 1, 99 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.

Present:

- Fiona Burns, SFC (Chair)
- Nick Stansfeld, SFC
- Chloe Dobson, Who Cares? Scotland
- Carly Telford, Corporate Parenting Ambassador
- Linda O'Neill, CELCIS
- Dr Peter Tormey, Edinburgh Napier University & CEECEF
- Dr Dan Keenan, University of Glasgow & CEESCW
- Karen McGuire, Skills Development Scotland
- Louise Piaskowski, Scottish Government
- Lorna Jenkins, West Lothian College
- Jen McKenzie, Borders College
- Andrée Carruthers, CDN
- Sam Turner, Become Charity
- Claire O'Hara, MCR Pathways
- Margaret Tierney, SQA
- Lorraine Moore, Hub for S.U.C.C.E.S.S
- Caroline Leburn, SFC
- Laura Hepburn, SFC
- Daniel Proudfoot, SFC

Apologies:

- Mark Wild, Universities Scotland
- Lorna Caldwell, SAAS
- James Dunphy, RGU
- Chris Sojka, University of Aberdeen

Welcome

1. Introductions were made. The Chair welcomed Lorraine Moore and Jen McKenzie to their first meeting of the Group.

Minutes from the last meeting (GG/19/Min 1)

2. The minutes were agreed as an accurate note.

Matters arising

3. The two matters arising from the last meeting had been actioned. There were no new matters arising.

Care experienced news update (GG/19/09)

4. Nick introduced this paper which included two annexes. The first annex was the letter from Deputy First Minister to the Heads of all Scottish local authorities on the use of the Care-Experienced Bursary, the second a CELCIS Beyond the headlines briefing on [Homelessness and care experience](#).
5. There was an additional update on progress with the North Forum. We heard that the inaugural meeting is next month with representatives from Aberdeen University, SRUC, UHI, RGU, NESCOL as well as a number of other partner organisations. It will mirror the work done by West Forum (CEESCW) and East Forum (CEECEF). CEGG will receive a more substantial update, including work with [Aberdeen City Council's Virtual School](#), at the next meeting.

Care-Experienced Students Bursary

6. Caroline updated the Group on SFC workshop seminar on FE Care-Experienced Bursary last month. She outlined the strengths, barriers and challenges encountered by the college finance teams.
 - At the workshop there was a reported perception that care-experienced students are receiving too much money. The Group asked where this perception is coming from, from agencies (college finance team/social workers) or from students?
 - We know that around 1,400 students have benefitted from the bursary but how many have had a negative experience? WC?S offered their members if any research was required.
 - We heard from the colleges at the meeting that the student support teams only hear from students when they run into difficulty, e.g. finances over the summer (when bursary stops, rent continues) and general budgeting, otherwise there has been positive feedback on the bursary.
 - Colleges are working best when the student support teams work closely with their funding colleagues. Colleges are trying to embed support e.g. drop-in surgeries for advice and guidance. We heard that where there is little support that is when difficulties can arise for CE students.
 - Could a college be identified as model of good practice so this can be shared with the sector? Glasgow Kelvin College was identified as a possibility as they have good relations with their local social services.
 - We also heard that independent budgeting support is out there e.g. DWP has a [Money Advice Service](#).

Action: The bursary will be an agenda item at the next meeting. We should identify a college with good practice that can be shared with the sector.

The HUB for S.U.C.C.E.S.S update, Lorraine Moore

7. Lorraine gave us an update on progress of the [HUB](#) which brings together City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh College, Newbattle Abbey, QMU, Universities of

Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Heriot-Watt and the OU. It aims to support those with CE to get in, stay in or return to education.

- The Hub has an Advisory Board (includes Principals, senior management from CEC), Steering Group (practitioners) and a Learner Advisory Board made up of care-experienced students.
 - They work with care-experienced people of *all* ages. They have helped 56 CE people since the start of the project in September 2018.
 - They give individual, tailored advice, and practical support as required, e.g. correct funding, gaining access their records, explaining and exploring the different pathways available. Those over the age of 26 years are generally more likely to find their own way, however they often require more emotional support.
 - The Hub encourages CE supporters and those in the partner institutions to be curious and creative in their questions of CE learners with the aim of tailoring support services.
 - The First Minister will visit the Hub in October 2019.
8. There was a discussion on access thresholds. Potential care-experienced students are becoming aware of contextualised offers, though they often require further explanation. We heard that some institutions are offering contextualised offers for CE during the clearing process too in all programmes. We also heard that some colleges are also offering guaranteed offers to CE students if they meet the minimum entry requirements.
9. There was a discussion on how much care-experienced school pupils are aware of the support available to them, particularly access to HE. The schools with MCR mentors will be okay but there was agreement that more could be done to increase awareness of front-line staff in other secondary schools.

Action: SFC to discuss this issue in more depth with the Scottish Government and advise the group at the next meeting.

Care Experienced Students at College and University 2017-18 (GG/19/10)

10. Nick gave an overview of the SFC data on care-experienced students. The college data was largely reported at the March meeting. The headlines for HEI data are:
- The numbers and proportions of care-experienced students at university are increasing from 335 in 2016-17 to 410 in 2017-18, which represent 0.6% of entrants. There are more CE students on Higher Education courses studying at college (415) than at university (410).
 - There were 360 Scottish-domiciled CE entrants proportionately represent 0.9% of Scottish-domiciled entrants in 2017-18. This is a big increase (265 in 2016-17) probably due to HEIs guarantee of a place if they reach minimum entry requirements.
 - Care-experienced entrants are more likely to have a disability than their peers, by 14.2 percentage points. And, more likely to suffer from multiple disabilities, have dyslexia, or have mental health difficulties.

- CE students continue to be under-represented in Engineering, both at college and university.
- University retention for CE students now 87.2% which is 5.3 percentage points below the sector average. For SIMD20 the retention rate for CE students is 79.4% (sector comparison 89.4%).
- Articulation: this is a popular route for CE students. 196 CE students, or 47.7% were captured using this route to access university from college, 90 CE students with Advanced Standing.

11. At last meeting, the Group asked about what under 17's are studying at college. *Answer:* only 3% are studying an HE course so 97% at FE level. Also, what is the proportion of over 25's at college. *Answer:* the proportion of care-experienced over the age of 25 is 33%, compared to the national figure of 28%. For CE they are also much more like to be female (70%).

12. Table 13, CE enrolment by SIMD quintile, and Table 17, articulation, will both be updated to include sector totals or proportions before the papers appears on SFC website.

13. There was a discussion on why CE students are more likely to suffer from dyslexia. We heard that this perhaps is because those from a care background are assessed more than their peers. Also if classes are missed, CE young people may not have the necessary building blocks and they might be classified as dyslexic when actually the issue is gaps in learning. Further work was required to increase understanding though this isn't an issue for CEGG.

14. There was a suggestion that SFC should look at success rates with CE students and other groups of students for example student carers, and those with a disability.

Action: SFC to look at the data on the success rates of care-experienced students who are also carers, and have a disability.

National Ambition for Care Experienced Students (GG/19/11)

15. Nick confirmed that SFC's National Ambition will be published on 4th September at the dissemination event of the Care-Experienced Students Survey. We will make clear that the Ambition is for all care-experienced students no matter the age. CEGG was asked to send further comments and edits to Nick.

Near-final 2019-20 Outcome Agreements (GG/19/12)

16. This paper was noted. SFC is reviewing what to include in Outcome Agreements 2020-21. There is speculation that OAs may be streamlined which might mean less text on support to care-experienced students. Institutions will certainly have to provide a link to their Corporate Parenting Plan in the OA. SFC may have to rethink how we find out what institutions are doing to support CE students.

MCR Pathways/HEI Group Model of Engagement (GG/19/13)

17. Claire gave the update on the MCR Pathways and their work specifically on engagement with HEIs. 13% of their mentored school pupils go to university, higher than Scottish Government data. They gave credit to the MCR/HEI working group which meets quarterly. There is a bespoke programme that increases awareness and raises aspirations for CE young people from S1-S6 through interactive visits to campuses, subject choice tasters and programmes.
18. All mentors and Pathways Coordinators are trained so that they also understand the routes available through FE to HE. The Coordinator's training also covers application process and post-acceptance support to help them with scholarships, funding and accommodation and suchlike. There is also involvement from the Robertson Trust who has a [Journey to Success Scholarship Programme](#).
19. MCR also has an online [Mentor Resource Centre](#) for where there are extensive guides and support on each stage of the learner journey, including into employment though this is the next area for development. They are currently developing a HE Booklet which sets out everything from deadline for applications, to funding options, to what to do if it goes wrong etc. After school they support their former mentees through monthly drop-in sessions.

Who Cares? Scotland Outcomes project

20. Chloe told us that WC?S are undergoing some staffing changes which includes Carly starting an internship at the University of Strathclyde, however she will remain as part of CEGG.
21. WC?S is arranging more collaborative training events, including themed ones. The next one has a careers focus at Strathclyde for FE and HE staff, on the 30th July there is a Care-Experienced and Employment Conference at GCU which will look at sustained link between colleges and universities and employers.
22. Who Cares is also involved in the HEI Corporate Parenting e-module. They have been capturing the voice of CE through video and written content.

CELCIS Survey of Care Experienced Students (GG/19/14)

23. Linda confirmed the report of the findings from the Survey will be published in two weeks' time on 26th June at SFC's Fair Access Conference. The report is 76 pages and includes lots of quotes from students as that was felt to be important. The dissemination event for practitioners will be held on 4th September at University of Strathclyde, further details TBC.
24. The report highlights a number of learning points or themes which emerged from the findings. One being the levels of complexities that care-experienced students face in their personal lives and so bespoke support, including reliable, consistent relationships with a trusted member of staff, as well as practical support, like

help with access to grants and bursaries, are enabling factors in sustaining studies.

Discussion on CEGG forward agenda (GG/19/15)

25. Fiona asked the Group what they thought about CEGG, the positives and areas for improvement which will inform CEGG's future agenda. Some feedback:

- Three meetings a year was about right.
- It was useful having guest speakers.
- The papers and meetings were informative and helpful though the agenda was always quite full.
- The meetings helped build relationships between members.
- The content sometimes favoured HEIs more than colleges.

26. Areas for improvement

- CEGG should outline what needs to be in place for effective partnership working e.g. common aims, shared values. This could then be used for how CEGG communicates messages for example how it shares best practice, how much is filtering through to the institutional Corporate Parenting Plans? How useful are its papers?
- There should be more CE students on the group.
- CEGG should produce some guidance notes on good corporate parenting.
- There should be more support for post graduate care-experienced students.
- There will be potential to disseminate data more quickly once it is made available earlier.
- CEGG should outline its achievements and impact.

27. Agenda items for future discussion

- Contextualised admissions.
- Communications paper on sharing messages and good practice.

AOB

28. The Educational Outcomes for Scotland's Looked After Children 2017-18 will be published on 18 June 2019. However, the Glasgow data used is 2016-17 as the region didn't meet deadline. The Scottish Government believes the report still gives an accurate picture. An update could be issued during the year.

29. Sam asked the Group for examples of institutional assessments of the impact of specific bursaries for care-experienced students. This would be for any funding provision that may have been analysed in terms of outcomes where the data is available (e.g. successful completions) or collecting narrative insights from learners themselves about the value of the additional financial support.

Next meeting

30. 28 November 2019; date arranged after the meeting. Then 26th March 2020.