

COBC learner voice:

"I contact my engagement worker when I have a problem."

"I would tell someone coming to college: Engage completely, because if you want help, it is going to be there."

"Meeting with an engagement worker has helped me with my organisation, with a timetable to do my work."

COBC teacher voice:

"It feels like you are part of a group working with the student, not on your own, so you feel supported."

"I think that most tutors don't understand the issues involved that affects this group, so communication really helps with that."

"Sometimes people's expectations of you can seem overwhelming."



What next for the project?

We will continue to liaise with teachers, social workers and carers to ensure successful outcomes and we will provide targeted guidance and training to teachers for this group of learners.

We are looking at how we can capture information about care status at application and interview.

We will be more involved in the transition process.

New roles have been created at COBC to work with care leavers to ensure a quality learner journey, further capture learner voice and improve educational aspirations and outcomes for care leavers.

Interested in finding out more?

Who Cares Trust

www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

**National Network of
Education for Care Leavers**

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ENSURING EDUCATION MATTERS

*Exploring the impact of
an engagement project
for care leavers in post
16 education*



Why develop this project?

Care Leavers are a marginalised group in society and disengagement is prevalent amongst this group.

Many care leavers have experienced instability at home and in education.



Statistics show a challenging picture, with 45% of care leavers having a mental health need and only 6% currently going to university. Alongside this, 30% of homeless people have been in the care system and a third of care leavers are not in education, training or employment.

What do we do?

We work with learners to overcome their individual barriers to learning. We do this by identifying and engaging care leavers at the college as early as possible and building empowering and supportive relationships through a coaching style of working.

We facilitate learning, participation and achievement by generating timely interventions around attendance, engagement, behaviour and individual need.

In developing these interventions, we hope to also promote the skills and aspiration for lifelong learning.

We work within an inclusive educational framework, which is underpinned by a multi-agency approach. We build very positive working relationships with the individual care leaver's team and support.

We work with teaching and other support staff throughout the college to raise awareness of the needs of care leavers, provide guidance and support to staff and challenge stereotypes. In this way we hope to raise staff and learner aspirations.

Successes come in many forms and we identify and celebrate these individual successes with the care leavers that we work with.

Outcome/Impact of project

Statistically, at the end of this first year of the project we have a 91% retention in Year 12 and 100% retention in over 19s.

Through developing proactive, supportive relationships with teaching and other staff, we have raised the profile of care leavers within the college.

We have developed specific, tailored support for individuals.

We have identified all those who are entitled to the bursary and ensured this is followed up and obtained.

Our Research

How we carried it out:

- Semi-structured interviews with young people and teachers
- Follow ethical protocol and adhere to BERA guidelines
- Thematic analysis
- Contributed findings to new structure
- CPD for staff

Themes that came out of research:

The care leavers and teaching staff that we interviewed felt that listening and collaborating enabled our learners to develop their own solutions

Young people felt that their voice is being heard and reported the benefits of accessing a consistent designated worker.

Many teachers lack confidence and knowledge with issues around care leavers and welcome support and guidance.

There is a clear need for earlier identification and continuing timely interventions

