
Foster Carer Training

Key Stage 5 Information

- Raising the Participation Age
 - Developments & Qualifications
 - Transitional Support
 - Higher Education
 - Employment
 - Support available
-

Virtual School Kent

October 2014

Raising the Participation Age – not ‘Raising the School Leaving Age’!

Did you know that all young people will be in education or training for longer?

This is called **Raising the Participation Age (RPA)**

What does that mean for those in Year 11?

- They will be expected to stay in learning or training until their 18th birthday

What choices do young people have?

- Young people can do any one of the following:
 - Full time education in school or college
 - Full time work with learning attached to it, e.g. an apprenticeship
 - Part time education if you are self-employed, volunteering or doing some other type of useful activity (for more than 20hours per week)

What is in it for the young person?

- By continuing to learn and participate the young person will improve both their career and life chances by developing the skills and qualifications they need to be successful

What to do now to support your young person?

- Investigate the options thoroughly, especially if they don't want to stay on at their current school 6th form
- Research careers that might be of interest to the young person - this will influence what subjects to study, where and how to learn. For some professions an apprenticeship may be the best route, while for others it may be university for example
- Visit schools and colleges and learning providers - they all have open days usually from November onwards
- Make sure you understand the qualification types available as they offer different ways of learning and different progression options

Who can help?

- If you are at school or college, talk to the careers teacher or guidance department. Schools have a statutory duty to provide independent, impartial guidance about all the options available to you.

Work Experience:

- There is no longer a legal requirement of schools to provide work experience for young people pre 16, however some schools have continued to offer this
- Work experience is crucial in helping young people find career paths they may enjoy, sometimes it is not until they actually try it that they find they no longer wish to follow that path
- Try and encourage the young person to take part in work experience or volunteering as much as possible to help with their choices and social skills
- Post 16 now have to provide the ‘opportunity’ of work experience for young people – what this actually means will differ from provider to provider

Post 16 update

Qualifications (see **Qualifications levels hand-out in KS4 pack**)

- Studying full time will be around 16 hours per week of taught time (with the same expected of ‘independent study’)
- Some schools will require young people to attend for more hours
- Qualifications are now referred to as a ‘Study Programme’ which are fully funded for those 16-19yrs (or up to 24 for those with learning difficulties/disabilities)
 - Now have to all be the same amount of hours (540 hours) and include:
 - The main qualification aim (e.g. Media)

- The opportunity to study English and Maths (if not already obtained a C grade or above)
- The opportunity to undertake work experience/employment skills
- Can include work related learning
- Creating a more individualised package for the young person

School Sixth Forms:

- Generally School Sixth Forms are looking at those ready to study at Level 3 offering a mixture of academic and vocational courses
- You can apply to a different school sixth form than the school you are currently attending but need to check their entry requirements
- They usually close their application deadline earlier than Colleges

Colleges:

- Most providers offer a range of levels in courses, for example, Hair and Beauty in Level 1, 2 and 3, this means that a young person can progress through the levels and start at the right level depending on their qualifications and skills
- Sometimes students will have to study a lower level than their prior qualifications if they have no prior experience of that new subject, e.g. Catering or Construction

Making Choices:

- Similar to the post 14 guidance, look to study something of interest and in a style that you will enjoy learning e.g. Vocational or Academic
- Attend open days – never too early to start – really important to visit the educational provider to see the facilities and meet the staff, young people will often get a feel for the place, can they see themselves studying there. It is also a good opportunity to try out the journey to the provider, how long does it take to get there (**see Open Day flyer**)
- Find out about where students progress onto from the courses – ask the teaching staff at interviews and open days what the employment opportunities are following that qualification
- Ask students that are currently on the course what it is like
- Visit <http://www.ucas.com/progress/student/what-are-my-options> for more guidance on options

Applying:

- Young people should make their applications via Kent Choices 4 U/UCAS Progress – an online application form that can be sent to different providers for different courses from November onwards <https://www.ucasprogress.com/search>
- Young people should have received their log-in to access their application through the post to their home and the school also receives a copy during October/November
- The young person will need to complete the basic information (contact details and qualifications)
- Choose courses wish to apply for and Send!
- Some schools set an early application deadline date
- Young people will then hear back from the provider with interview information
- Find out exactly what will happen at an interview – what to take with them, any assessments, will they know if they have received an offer, what is expected of them after the interview e.g. some College's hold induction events before the start of term and are strict on attendance
- It is important that the young person keeps in-touch with their application choice providers regarding their interviews and offers – if the young person misses an interview it is up to the young person to contact the provider to re-book the interview, otherwise the young person could lose their application/place with the provider

Accepting Offers:

- The young person will be asked to reply to their offer, sometimes by a certain date
- It is important that the young person is making the right choice for them and not to feel rushed

Enrolment & Induction:

- Find out exactly when the induction and enrolment events take place and what information is needed

- Are the providers running any events over the summer period? If so are these mandatory? Will they set the young person work to complete over the summer break? If so, are there any consequences if the work has not been completed?

The first 6 weeks:

- The first term is really important for both the young person and the educational provider – for the young person is it their opportunity to show the provider their skills/interests/motivation and academic levels
- Some young people may find they are moved to a different level (higher or lower)
- Some young people may find that the course isn't quite what they thought it was going to be – it is important that the young person speaks to someone about this and not just leave the course
 - The young person may be able to move to a different course at the same provider
 - Or move to a different provider
- The educational providers have to report on the numbers of students on each course at the end of the first term, this is how they receive some of their funding so they need to be sure that the course is right for the student. This may mean that some young people are on a 'trial' for the first 6 weeks and could be asked to leave the course during the first term
 - Find out how the provider manages this process – so that the young person is clear on what is expected of them during the first 6 weeks e.g. 95% attendance
 - And that the implications may be of not meeting those expectations

Transitional Support:

- The young person should start looking at their options for post 16 as early as possible, it should be included in any PEP/Review meetings through year 10 and 11
- VSK has Support Officers who may be working with the young person to build on their study skills, or they may be receiving tuition to help with exams – remember if they achieve the C grade in English and Maths they will not have to study it at post 16 education again, but the young person will have to prove that they have achieved the C grade otherwise they will have to re-site the GCSE
- From the February time prior to starting post 16, the VSK team will identify those young people that may need additional support with their transition into post 16 options, this may involve meeting with the post 16 Support Officer or Assistant Head, arranging visits to the next provider – to settle any anxiousness
- **Designated Member of Staff for Care Leavers (DMS) (see DMS contacts sheet)**
 - All of the Kent and Medway Colleges (and universities) have a DMS specifically for Care Leavers
 - Their role is to be the key contact for all involved with the young person
 - They can meet with the young person before applying, support them with viewing the College or University, provide support during the course and support at review meetings
 - The DMS would like to meet the young person before they start their course, at Open Days, arrange a visit during the holiday periods when it is a little quieter, or a phone-call

Financial Support - Post 16 (see FE Bursary Flyer)

- There is a new bursary for Care Leavers aged 16-18 in post 16 education
- A bursary to the value of £1,200 per academic year if studying full time
- The bursary is to support the young person with their education
- Each provider can administer the bursary to the young person how they wish – this means some may give it to the young person in regular payments, some may use it towards travel costs
- All of the Kent Colleges administer it in a similar way
- A young person is also entitled to the bursary if they have stayed on at a school sixth form
- The bursary may have requirements linked to it, e.g. a % attendance criteria – check with the educational provider as to how the bursary is given
- The young person applies to the provider, the provider applies to the Government for the funding

The Local Authority also provide some financial assistance for post-16 – check with the Social Worker for what may be available e.g Freedom pass

Higher education is usually taught at universities, higher education colleges, specialist art institutions and agricultural colleges. Distance learning courses are also available e.g. Open University

Young people won't usually begin higher education until they are 18yrs old.

There are over 50,000 courses available to higher education, with different entry requirements and types of study. Look at www.ucas.com for more information on courses and how to apply.

Higher education is a possibility for young people, it may mean that it takes a little longer, but as long as the young person knows it can be an option for them, even if it is 10 years away.....

The University Designated Members of Staff (DMS) are also there to offer transitional support for those thinking of studying at this level (**see HE flyer**)

- All Kent and Medway universities offer additional support for care leavers, supporting with choices and interview processes
- The additional support will vary – ask what they offer, some will offer all year round accommodation, some will cover the costs of the graduation ceremony or provide the young person with equipment
- Some universities may also offer care leavers a financial bursary
- Contact the university to find out what they offer and arrange a visit with the DMS
- **Mentoring offer**
 - the Kent universities offer a mentoring service for Children in Care/Care Leavers from year 10 above. The mentoring links together the young person and a current university student for 6 1:1 sessions at a convenient location for both. If you are interested in this and want to find out more, please contact Rachel Calver rachel.calver@kent.gov.uk
 - the University of Greenwich and VSK are developing an e-mentoring scheme through the Brightside Trust – contact Rachel Calver if you think your young person would be interest in this

Applying for Higher Education:

- The application is completed online via www.ucas.com
- You can apply for up to 5 different courses
- The application has to be paid for - £12 if you're applying to just one course, or £23 for multiple courses
- Application deadline dates:
 - Applications for Oxford, Cambridge, Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry – 15th October
 - Applications for choices to be considered equally – 15th January
 - Applications for some Art & Design courses – 24th March
 - Applications to be opened before Clearing – 30th June
 - Applications received after 30th June will automatically go into clearing
- On the application form, tick the box stating you are a care leaver – this will let the university know that you are in care and can ensure you are kept informed of the specific support available to you
- Find out what accommodation is offered if looking to move into halls of residence and when to apply for it
- Find out what support is offered from the Local Authority if studying Higher Education – at the moment all Local Authorities have to provide Care Leavers with a £2000 bursary whilst at university as a minimum
- Care Leavers are entitled to the full amount of financial support from the government, on top of what the Local Authority provides
 - You need to prove your care leaver status – usually a letter from the Local Authority confirming status is adequate
 - Start the application as soon as it goes live (usually around January time)
 - <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>

University Finance:

Tuition Fee Loans

- You can take out a Tuition Fee Loan for up to £9,000, rather than paying up front (or up to £6,000 for a private university or college)
- This loan will be paid directly to the university or college, and you won't start paying it back until after your course finishes, and only when you're earning above a certain level (over £21,000 at the moment)

Maintenance Loans and Grants

- **If you're a full-time UK applicant, you might also be able to get a Maintenance Loan or Maintenance Grant to help with your living costs** – you can apply for these at the same time as you apply for a tuition fee loan
- **Maintenance Loan** – these are loans you'll have to pay back later – they provide you with money at the start of each term (or monthly if you study in Scotland). The amount you can get varies, depending on your household income, where you study, where you live and how long for
- **Maintenance Grant** – these are grants you don't have to pay back – they're available if you're from a low income household. They're paid at the same time as the Maintenance Loan

Maintenance Loan:

Full-time student	Loan for courses from September 2014	Loan for courses from September 2015
Living at home	Up to £4,418	Up to £4,565
Living away from home, outside London	Up to £5,555	Up to £5,740
Living away from home, in London	Up to £7,751	Up to £8,009
You spend a year of a UK course studying abroad	Up to £6,600	Up to £6,820

Maintenance Grant:

Full-time student – household income	Grant for courses from September 2014	Grant for courses from September 2015
£25,000 or less	£3,387	£3,387
£30,000	£2,441	£2,441
£35,000	£1,494	£1,494
£40,000	£547	£547
£42,620	£50	£50
Over £42,620	No grant	No grant

Other Colleges and Universities across the Country can apply for a quality mark from Buttle UK which recognises the additional support they offer to Care Leavers. To find out who they key contacts are, visit <http://www.buttleuk.org/pages/quality-mark-for-care-leavers.html>

Work based training has developed further over the last couple of academic years with the introduction of Traineeships and Supported Internships:

Supported Internship:

- For those aged 16-24yrs with a learning difficulty or disability
- With an SEN/LDA/EHC
- A programme which combines study with a work placement
- Lasts for at least 6 months
- Unpaid
- Offered through Schools or Colleges

Traineeship:

- For those aged 16-23yrs (or up to 25yrs for those with a learning difficulty/disability)
- Lasts 6 weeks – 6 months – individualised
- Includes work placement, skills needed to gain employment, Maths and English and an improved CV
- Not usually paid

Apprenticeship:

- Has to last a minimum of 12 months
- Must include the NVQ, knowledge based questions, functional skills (and/or GCSEs from 2015) and a technical certificate
- Should be a minimum of 30 hours per week with study time

For Apprenticeship opportunities, register with the national apprenticeship website to seek vacancies and apply – all you need is an email account. Once you have registered you can search for vacancies and then apply, after one application, it will save your information so you only have to tweak it for further applications - <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>

Assisted Apprenticeships Scheme

- Kent County Council are offering a scheme where they will pay the salary costs of an apprenticeship for one year on a Level 2 or 50% of a Level 3 apprenticeship
- The apprenticeship works like any other – learning whilst on the job and obtaining a qualification at the same time
- The young person needs to find the apprenticeship placement
- You should be paid the minimum wage, some employers pay more, or provide other incentives e.g. equipment or travel costs
- To find out more about the Assisted Apprenticeship Scheme, contact Rachel Calver rachel.calver@kent.gov.uk

Minimum Wage

From the 1st October 2014

- Apprentices earn minimum £2.73 per hour
- Under 18yrs £3.77 per hour
- 18-20yrs £5.13 per hour
- 21yrs+ £6.50 per hour

Volunteering

- You can never have too much experience, and now more than ever it is important to start getting work-related experience. This is a valuable way of finding out more about your future career path
- You get to practice the skills employers are looking for
- It can also be a way of 'getting a foot in the door' – the employer can see how good you are and when a vacancy comes up, you may be in a better position for the post
- Make contact with companies you are interested and ask if you can carry out some volunteering

Be ready!

- Have a good CV that is updated regularly
- Know how to write an application to meet the short listing process successfully
- Practice interview techniques
- Identify what it is the young person is willing to take on to get a foot in the door

What employers are looking for:

- Basic literacy and numeracy skills
- A smart appearance
- Enthusiasm
- A willingness to learn
- Some work/voluntary experience
- Transferable skills
 - Time management
 - Communication skills
 - Computer literate
 - Information gathering and research
 - Group and teamwork
 - Customer service

Websites:

- www.do-it.org
- www.vinspired.com
- www.volunteering.org.uk

Virtual School Kent – support

- **Support Officers**
 - May be able to provide support with study skills, tuition, post 16 applications
 - Can meet with the young person in the school or at home
 - May also support at PEP meetings
- **The Achievement Improvement Fund (AIF)**
 - AIF is for Kent Children in Care and Young People and Care Leavers who are engaged in some form of education
 - It is not designed to replace statutory educational provision but is there to support and enhance it
 - It can be accessed by Kent Children in Care who are placed outside in or outside of Kent
 - It is for activities that might be expected to lead directly to measurable improved achievement/attendance/engagement
- **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**
 - PEPs for those post 16 is now mandatory – there will be an ePEP for post 16 shortly, in the meantime continue to use the paper format which can be found on our website
 - All of the Kent Colleges actively engage in this process to ensure support is in place for Care Leavers
 - Please encourage your young person to participate in these meetings as it brings together all those working with the young person to celebrate their achievements and to ensure that progress is taking place
- **Transitional support**
 - As the young person progress towards their post 16 options, they may require additional support with the transition
 - The VSK staff can work with you and the young person to support the transition – by working with the Designated Members of Staff in the Colleges or other schools

- Year 11 PEPs will be looking at the progression and should discuss any support with transition

OCYPC

- The Our Children and Young People's Council (OCYPC) meets each school holiday to discuss upcoming matters
- They have recently been involved in the filming of the Care to Listen 2 DVD, the VSK Newsletter for young people and increasing awareness of the Kent Pledge
- During the past year they have organised 16 activity days in the school holidays and 239 children have attended at least one activity day with 69 children attending two or more. The activities include cookery, sports, outdoor pursuits, music & dance and arts & crafts
- "Over the Easter Holidays we organised four events across Kent starting off with a Circus Skills activity day where 50 young people had a go at plate spinning, pedelos, tightrope walking and much more. We saw lots of new faces as well as some young people who have attended our days before
- Little Potters in Sittingbourne was our next event, for 3 to 7 year olds. The children had the chance to paint some ornaments before lunch and then time to play in the soft play area
- Next, we were in Herne Bay for an Art Activity Day attended by 22 young people. We did t-shirt printing and made our own felt
- Finally, we were in Ashford for Gliding. We had two turns each in the glider with different types of take-off. Whilst in the air, we could see many different towns around Kent before having a go at steering and some of us doing loop-the-loop"

Please contact us for details about our upcoming events:

VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk

East and South Kent: 01227 284432 – Sophia, Hayley & Bella

North and West Kent: 03000 412128 - Amelia

Other support and activities:

- **Connexions Kent (CXK) - <http://cxk.org/>**
 - They are continuing to work with young people to support them with their life choices
 - They have a 'Youth Contract' to support Care Leavers into education, employment or training
 - Some young people may be referred to CXK for support with finding education, employment or training
 - CXK can continue to work with the young person over a period of time (usually a year)
- **National Citizen Service**
 - Open to all 16 and 17-year-olds in England
 - It helps you build your skills for work and life, while you take on new challenges and meet new friends
 - It runs in the spring, summer and autumn. You'll have a short time away from home and take part in a team project that will help your community
 - Brings together young people from different backgrounds and helps them develop greater confidence, self-awareness and responsibility. It encourages personal and social development by working on skills like leadership, teamwork and communication
 - Participants develop a social action project to deal with a local issue they're passionate about, and spend 30 hours putting the project into action in their community
 - Apply through CXK
- **Fairbridge – Princes Trust - <http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/default.aspx?page=7548>**
 - Fairbridge offers a different approach to learning – offering practical skills (physical and creative)
 - With one-to-one support as well as group activities, their dedicated staff will support the young person to stabilise their life and build the skills they need to move forward

- The programme begins with a five day Access course. You will be doing challenging and adventurous activities at The Prince's Trust Centre as well as staying away from home for one night somewhere completely different
 - The programme continues for as long as it's needed and, once ready, you will be supported in moving on to a positive step or outcome. It is your choice to join the programme, your choice to stay on it and you will not be made to do anything you don't want to
 - VSK have funded places on this course. If you are interested, please speak to your Social Worker or school
- **Work Experience at VSK & KCC**
 - VSK, along with other teams within KCC, can offer work experience opportunities to young people exploring working within Social Care
 - Please contact Rachel Calver Rachel.calver@kent.gov.uk

Careers Guidance

- Schools now have to provide impartial careers guidance for its young people, check what your school/college offers regarding careers guidance
- Young people can access the National Careers Service phone support for those aged 16-18, for those aged 19 plus can see a Careers Adviser in person through the National Careers Service <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>
- Talk to other people that have studied the subjects interested in, or are in that profession to find out what it is really like
- Visit places – open days, ring companies to ask for a tour
- Work backwards! – if the young person knows the end goal, work backwards to check they are meeting any necessary requirements
- Check what you are being told by providers, remember the young person means money to them so they want to have them join their course – check if it is the right course for that young person, check what the actual qualification is they would be studying and where it leads to
- Raising the young persons aspiration is crucial – they have 3 years of free education to make the most of that opportunity, help them to make the best of those 3 years