



POST16 UPDATE

Higher and Further Education Information for Young Care Leavers Autumn Term 2016

WELCOME... RACHEL CALVER, POST16 ASSISTANT HEAD (FE & HE)

Well, it has been a very busy start to the new academic year supporting students with their college enrolments and training providers. The Post 16 Support Officer team have been camped out at the College's working closely with the College Designated Members of Staff to ensure the young person is supported through the start of term, helping to apply for the bursary and settling in. They were also on hand to offer support to young people who wanted to consider other options.

Calum, the teams Data Assistant, has been working hard with the team to update our records with this years young people's destinations and Jane, the teams Admin Assistant has been keeping the team on track.



I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the team and Designated Members of Staff in being able to identify so quickly which young people have enrolled where, we have been able to confirm around 80% of our young people already, making it a quicker process of identifying those that may need additional support in accessing education, training or employment.

TRAINING

Understanding the Post 16 Sector training is due to start in November for Foster Carers delivered by Rachel, the Post 16 Assistant Head. Training takes place across the county and is delivered in collaboration with the Skills and Employability team of KCC. Also attending will be representatives from the Designated Member of Staff scheme from the Kent and Medway Colleges and Universities.

Rachel is also presenting a workshop at the [National Network for the Education of Care Leavers](#) in November. The workshop will focus on the comprehensive transition process that VSK have in place to support young people transitioning into Post 16.

In partnership with Virtual School Medway, Rachel will be team teaching the undergraduate Social Worker students at the University of Kent around the importance of the Social Workers role in relation to the education of children in care and young care leavers. If the session goes well, plans are to be developed to extend this offer to other universities.

POST 16 CHOICES

It is that time of year again when young people in year 11 begin making their post 16 choices. As a reminder, there are a wide range of opportunities for young people to access that include:

- ◆ Staying on in Sixth form
- ◆ Going to College
- ◆ Undertaking an Apprenticeship or traineeship
- ◆ Employment with training
- ◆ Work based learning

For those young people in Year 11, the [VSK Year 11 Progression Support Officers](#) are on hand to support with this process. There is more information available - <http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/college-sixth-form-employment-and-training>

For young people in years 12 and 13 now, if you are not sure of your post 16 options, or not happy with your current choices, the [VSK Post 16 Support Officers](#) are here to help you. Please contact them as soon as possible ,

The Skills & Employability team of Kent County Council have also developed two new websites to help young people explore their post 16 options in Kent:

- ◆ [Apprenticeship Kent](#) - a one-stop shop for vocational training and employment opportunities in Kent. It advertises opportunities including apprenticeships, work experience, jobs with training and school leaver programmes.
- ◆ [Ready To Work Kent](#) - helps you find great training opportunities, build your skills and put you on the path to your ideal career. We know not everyone wants to stay in school until 18, so we want to make young people aware of other ways to get the qualifications that will open doors for you in the world of work. If you are not going to sixth form, college or are currently unemployed then we can help you explore your options.

NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE

- ◆ Are you in Year 11 or Year 12? Do you fancy a week away at an activity centre? Then another week away at a university?
- ◆ Do you enjoy meeting new people? Do you like working as part of a team? Are you looking at improving your confidence?



If you've answered YES to all these questions then why not take part in NCS next Summer. Contact Tracy Woodhall at tracy.woodhall@kent.gov.uk or 07554 456950 for more information.

AWARDS EVENING

The third annual VSK Post 16 Awards evening was held on the 20th October with a fantastic turnout of young people and their supporters. Held at Oakwood House in Maidstone, the evening celebrated the hard work and achievements of the Post 16 young people, nominated by their education providers, Social Workers, Foster Carers and VSK staff. The evening started with entertainment in the form of a magician, Kent Sports provided sporting games, canvas boards for young people to share their top tips for new year 11 young people, along with quizzes and raffles amongst the award ceremony.



The following awards were presented:

- ◆ 7 young people received 'Star of 2016' awards for their involvement with our Young Adults Council
- ◆ 85 Bronze Awards
- ◆ 7 Silver Awards
- ◆ 1 Gold Award

TRANSITION PROGRESS

The Post 16 team are working hard to put together a “transition” pack to help smooth the transition from key stage 4 to key stage 5 and beyond. The idea of the pack is to provide professionals (Foster Carers, Social Workers, Personal Advisers, etc.) with a pack of resources to outline the process and key things to consider when looking at post 16 options. We will also be updating our website to include these helpful resources in November.

A new policy has been developed in conjunction with the education directorate of Kent County Council focusing in the support process for young people to access education, training and employment. This policy is due to be launched in October and will also be added to the new transition pack and [VSK website](#).

EPEP has also seen the addition of some key questions to support transition:

- ◆ There is a new 14-19 transition section which enables all to focus on the young persons plans during key stage 4 and key stage 5
- ◆ There are new questions regarding applications made to key stage 5 so that the team can keep a track of applications and identify where additional support may be needed

CONGRATULATIONS to Matt Willock, our UASC Support Officer on the arrival of baby Scarlett back in the summer.



SPORTS THERAPY PROJECT FOR UASC

This is a new pilot project set up by Dr Ana Draper who is the UASC project lead at Sussex Partnership Foundation NHS Trust. Her and her team have researched UASC well-being and have found that 45% of these children are exhibiting post traumatic symptoms. There is a wealth of literature that shows sport and physical activity triggers chemicals in the brain that makes us feel happier and more relaxed. This led to the idea of offering some movement based therapy for the UASC cohort.

The programme is for six weeks consisting of 12 sessions. There are three coaches involved as well the psychologists and interpreters. So far the young people have completed three sessions and already there is a positive change in their responses. Before each session the young person completes a short protocol which helps them to focus on a negative memory and the thoughts and feelings associated with their memory. They then participate in different bi-lateral movement exercises such as running, ladder exercises and various warm up stretches. According to NICE, bi-lateral movement (running/swimming/cycling) supports the memory to integrate with the cognitive side of the brain and is a preferred treatment for PTSD.

Afterwards they again complete the protocol sheet and note any changes of feelings and thoughts on a scale. Already there seems to be a positive shift for all the participants and Dr Ana is hopeful that as the weeks progress the young people will see the lasting benefits of these exercises on their mind and body.

So far we have had a total of 22 young people attending the sessions, 13 of those are from the Isle of Sheppey. We look forward to evaluating the programme once it is finished.

CARE LEAVER PROGRESSION PARTNERSHIP (CLPP)

VSK has been working with the CLPP developing collaborative support for young people accessing education in Kent and Medway which has recently seen the development of an 'Employability & Engagement Charter'.

Members of the CLPP are committed to offering every CiC/YCL an outstanding service which will maximise their progression opportunities as they leave KS55, into employment, training, further education or higher education. Through the use of the charter we will be able to monitor the support offered to our young people, recording it on the ePEP system and discussing in review meetings. Partners are now in the process of signing up to the charter and a copy of the charter checklist can be accessed via the ePEP noticeboard.

The partnership is also exploring the development of a progression agreement for education providers to use when a young person has not met the set entry criteria for a specific programme of study. We will bring you more news as this develops.

A transition programme is also in development, along with a Higher Education workshop for young people, foster carers and social workers. Keep an eye on our website for further developments.

FINDING SPACE TO THINK AND STUDY

It can sometimes be hard to find quiet study time at home. Siblings or friends can get in the way, or may be, like me, you're easily distracted. You meant to do that bit of college work, but before you know it you've made yourself 4 cups of tea, and watched 3 episodes of something you don't even like that much... sound familiar. Have you thought about going down to your local library? There's more there than you might think.

For starters there is FREE access to computers and internet. Or if you prefer to use your own device, they all have FREE Wi-Fi! If you're under 18 and it's for your homework, you can print and photocopy for free. You can also access a range of subject specific journals and publications which could really help with a college project.

Obviously they are quiet (ish) spaces where you can study, but you will still be able to ask for help from the Librarians about how to access all the free services they provide. Services like study groups, reading groups, online courses including Job and interview guidance and much more. You can even get advice from a librarian about a college project or homework by using the online form on the KCC website below.

So if it's been a while since you've been to a library or you thought they were just about borrowing books... give it a try. <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries>

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF.....

Hello everyone, my name is Jane Charlton and I joined VSK in April 2016 as the Admin Officer for the Post16 team. The last six months have been a fascinating learning experience for me and a great introduction to the world of VSK.



My daily duties are to provide administrative support to our Post 16 (FE/HE) Assistant Head and 9 Post16 & UASC Post 16 Support Officers. I receive and process Post 16 Provision budget applications, contacting tuition agencies to arrange tutors and liaising with social workers, foster carers and finance teams daily to help ensure services and payments relating to equipment, resources and services provided for young people from the Post 16 Provision Budget are progressed through to completion.

I work closely with the wider VSK team providing assistance as required and enjoy answering queries which come in via email and phone. I attend team and external meetings to provide administrative support whenever required and recently was involved in the organisation of our Post16 Awards evening. So my day is always varied and enjoyable with a great group of colleagues. I believe we all have opportunities to positively impact young people's lives whether that's directly or indirectly.

YOUNG ADULTS COUNCIL UPDATE



The Young Adult Council (YAC) is for Kent Children in Care and Care Leavers aged 16-21. The group represents young people and helps them to have their say on what it is like being in care and what they would like to change about the care system.

Over the summer break the VSK Participation Team organised an activity day at Go Ape specifically for young people aged 16 years and over. This was a great opportunity for us to promote YAC to the young people who attended and of the eight who attended six are now YAC members.

On 10th September members of YAC along with VSK staff completed a 25 km walk for The Who Cares? Trust to help Children in Care and Care Leavers. The 25km walk over 16 of London's best bridges started at Putney Bridge then headed East towards the City, zigzagging through the capital over historic bridges and crossing the finish line next to Tower Bridge. Despite the awful weather everyone in the group completed the walk and raised £590 for the charity.

At the YAC meetings this year, YAC members have learnt lots of life skills such as first aid, cooking on a budget, cv/employment skills and healthy eating. They have also been part of discussions and gathered feedback, getting members voices heard and making a difference. They recently met with the head of the 18+ service who wanted to know how they can make their service better for care leavers and help prepare them before they turn 18. YAC have also given input into the design of the pathway plan and gave their feedback on the current Kent Cares Town website. At the November YAC meeting we will be discussing what we would like the aims of YAC to be in 2017, as well as putting forward ideas for the YAC Christmas outing. Initiations for this will be sent out shortly.

The recruit crew is doing really well, with training being given to provide young people that attend a LASER qualification in Interview Training for Service Users. YAC members have attended this training and now have another qualification to add to their CV's.

YAC now has a good core membership, with a growing UASC attendance. The group is extremely diverse and growing more confident each time we meet. YAC members fed back that although they knew it was important for a formal meeting to take place, having fun was also imperative. We listened to this and at the last YAC we went bowling after the meeting.

For more information about what we do or if you know any young people who would be interested in joining please get in touch with us at VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk.