

The challenges facing the care leaver are grouped within the Commitment into:

- Outreach and guidance
- Support through the application process
- Structured support by the higher education provider

This means that higher education providers need to recognise the disadvantage that exists and ensure that the necessary adjustments are made. It is not easy to navigate the care system and to achieve a place in higher education at the same time. That is why there are so few students from care studying in higher education.

It is envisaged that higher education providers will link this Commitment to other schemes and activities, such as Aimhigher. The intention is to obtain a commitment from the higher education provider which will ensure that the particular needs of care leavers are taken into consideration and that appropriate support is readily accessible as required. The wishes of care leavers as independent adults with rights to confidentiality must be respected at all times.

The Commitment expects higher education providers to:

- Raise aspirations and achievement
- Ensure that admissions procedures for care leavers are appropriate
- Provide entry and ongoing support
- Monitor implementation of the Commitment

The Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark

To receive recognition under the scheme, higher education providers will need to apply to the Trust for registration, demonstrating how their commitment to care leavers is embedded in their strategic policy framework, and how they will implement and monitor the scheme. The Frank Buttle Trust will issue a Quality Mark to qualifying higher education providers, and review their plans for implementing and operating the scheme.

For full information about The Frank Buttle Trust, the Commitment and the Quality Mark, please go to: www.buttletrust.org

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Charity Reg. No. 313007



The Frank Buttle Trust



The Frank Buttle Trust

For Children & Young People



The Frank Buttle Trust

The Frank Buttle Trust is the largest UK charity providing grants to thousands of individual children and young people in need annually. The Trust provides assistance through its:

- Child Support Grant Scheme
- School Fees Grant Scheme
- Students and Trainees Grant Scheme

The By Degrees Action Research Project

In the course of providing support, through the Students and Trainees Grant Scheme, for young people attending university who had been in local authority care, the Trust became aware that the challenges they face are radically different to those faced by the vast majority of students.

In order to evaluate the experience of those who had moved to university from care, the Trust, in 2001, commissioned a five-year action research study *By Degrees: From Care to University*. The research project, in which 129 care leavers participated, was undertaken by the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London.

The Final Research Report

The final research report, *Going to university from care*, launched in May 2005, demonstrated that those who succeeded did so against considerable odds, both in terms of pre-entry support, and support by the higher education provider.



The process of applying to and succeeding within higher education is a challenge for any young person. It is significantly more difficult for someone who may not have the traditional family support structure, parental involvement in the school process, and who may have only limited engagement with Connexions, careers services and other agencies.

Once they enter higher education, students from care backgrounds may find that they have limited, if any, financial support on arrival, no residential accommodation in the vacations and no family support to fall back on.

Higher Education Commitment to Care Leavers

The Frank Buttle Trust has worked with Universities UK, the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), the Association of Colleges (AOC) and the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE), to develop a statement of commitment to supporting care leavers in higher education. This statement provides a charter through which higher education providers can demonstrate their commitment to supporting care leavers.

The Commitment recognises the challenges faced by care leavers entering higher education and seeks to:

- Facilitate an increase in the numbers of care leavers entering higher education;
- Raise awareness of the needs of this group of students;
- Enable care leavers to make the most of their time in higher education and to complete their courses successfully;
- Help higher education providers to identify how best to support care leavers;
- Contribute to a national framework to assist local authorities to fulfil their obligations to care leavers.

Adoption of this Commitment will mean that higher education providers will need to be more flexible in their support systems and to form active working relationships with local authorities and Trusts to ensure that an appropriate plan is in place to support care leavers.

Leaving Care legislation places a statutory obligation on local authorities and Trusts to provide financial, practical and emotional support for young people formerly in care, for as long as they remain in an approved programme of education.

