

Engaging Young Adult Carers

Targeted support for colleges

Final project and evaluation report

April 2018

*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
merged to form Learning and Work Institute*

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Executive summary

Delivered between April 2017 and March 2018, the aim of this project was to provide targeted and intensive one-to-one support to six colleges throughout England, to enable them to develop an effective and embedded whole organisation approach to working with young adult carers.

Funded by the Department for Education (DfE), L&W worked in partnership with the Carers Federation to develop and use the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) as a framework to enable colleges to review, improve and evaluate their provision for young adult carers. This report provides an overview of the activities carried out through the project, the key findings of the evaluation and case studies of each of the six colleges involved.

Project approach

For this project, the eight key points included in the Standard were reviewed and adapted to ensure they were directly relevant to the specific needs and experiences of young adult carers. A summary of the revised QSCS framework is included as an annex to this report.

L&W successfully recruited and supported six colleges for the duration of the project:

- Abingdon and Witney College
- Capel Manor College
- Kirklees College
- Newcastle College
- Solihull College
- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Each college involved in the project was allocated a key contact at L&W who provided them with intensive, tailored, one-to-one support from October 2017 to January 2018. In addition, L&W ran five online group sessions for colleges to share effective practice, documents and solutions to common challenges. Two of these sessions included inputs from external colleges which already has strong support in place for young adult carers.

Alongside the support, L&W conducted an evaluation of the project which assessed both the process undertaken to support colleges and the outcomes and impact that this had for colleges and for young adult carers.

Colleges' experiences of the support

All six colleges emphasised how important the QSCS Framework had been in helping them to review their existing support and identify where improvements were needed. Overall, colleges were also extremely positive about their experience of support for the project from L&W. The online group sessions were highly valued by the participating colleges, particularly those whose provision for young adult carers was less developed.

All participating colleges have now been assessed and were successful in achieving the QSCS Standard. The assessment reports for each college are included as separate annexes to this report.

Progress made as a result of the project

The below bullet points summarise colleges' progress under the eight points of the QSCS.

Carers policy and strategic commitment

- This part of the QSCS framework was a key area of development for all but one of the colleges involved in the project.
- Four of the colleges developed or updated their organisational policy on supporting young adult carers.
- All five colleges that focussed on this area successfully secured senior management buy-in to their support for young adult carers.
- Two of the colleges also made good progress in securing buy-in from their governors, identifying a link governor and briefing them on young adult carer issues.

Designated lead for carers

- Four of the colleges already had a Designated Member of Staff (DMS) for carers prior to the project. The remaining two identified a DMS as part of their work towards the QSCS.
- All of the colleges had used the project to promote the details of their carers leads, both internally to staff and students and externally to partner organisations.
- Having a DMS enabled colleges to run various awareness raising activities and improve links with relevant partner organisations.

Staff training

- All of the colleges delivered staff training and/or awareness raising activities as part of the project.
- Three colleges developed or bought-in online training packages for new staff to complete in their inductions.
- By the end of the project, staff training had resulted in increased identification of young adult carers and improved confidence amongst staff to provide appropriate support.

Outreach and raising aspirations

- Colleges started to promote the support they offer to young adult carers on their website, prospectuses and marketing materials, to encourage potential students with caring responsibilities to apply.
- One college's school liaison team added information about young adult carers to their presentations, and another developed considerable transition support for young adult carers through the project.

Student application, enrolment and induction

- By the end of the project, five colleges had a tick box for young adult carers on their application and enrolment forms, and the sixth was exploring the best way to implement this change. Two colleges also added this to their applications for financial support.
- To support disclosure, colleges promoted their support for young adult carers at enrolment and induction sessions.
- Four colleges also developed forms or processes to explore the support needs of identified young adult carers at induction, so early support could be put in place.

Ongoing support

- Through the project, colleges reviewed the support they provided to young adult carers, started to address identified gaps and promoted the specific support available to this group across their organisations.
- Specific support developed included individual support and crisis plans, young carers cards and priority access to the discretionary part of the 16-19 Bursary.
- By the end of the project, colleges felt that there was a much greater awareness of the support available to young adult carers amongst both staff and students, which in turn had supported the identification of students with caring responsibilities.

Partnerships and networking

- Four colleges further developed their existing partnerships with local carers services and three established new working relationships with carers services. This enabled colleges to involve carers services in the delivery of staff training, attendance at freshers fairs or facilitating a young adult carer peer support group.
- Colleges also developed partnerships with other relevant organisations, such as local authorities, schools and other colleges, to improve referral routes and information sharing about young adult carers.

Data collection and monitoring

- By the end of the project, all of the colleges had established processes to collect and monitor data on their identified young adult carers' attendance, retention, achievement and progression, and compare this against other learner groups.
- Colleges had also started using this data as evidence to secure further buy-in from senior staff to implement additional support for young adult carers.

Outcomes

Participation in the project resulted in a range of positive outcomes for the colleges involved. These included:

- Gaining the impetus needed to review and improve their support and provision for young adult carers.
- Securing strong buy-in from senior management and governors, and the implementation of whole-organisation approaches to supporting this group.
- A rapid increase in the number of identified young adult carers.
- The development of more comprehensive and tailored support for young adult carers across all curriculum areas.
- Increased confidence amongst staff in different roles and curriculum areas to identify and support young adult carers.
- External recognition of their support for young adult carers through the QSCS award, which will make them an attractive option for future students and their parents/carers.
- Improved data collection and monitoring of young adult carers, providing the evidence needed to implement additional support or flexibilities.
- Positive outcomes for the staff members involved in delivering the project, such as improved job satisfaction.

Introduction

Background

The 2011 Census identified more than 314,000 young adult carers aged 16-24 in England and Wales, the equivalent of more than 1 in 20 young people. However, the real number of young adult carers is likely to be much higher as many do not consider themselves to be carers or have the confidence to tell others about their caring role. In total, these young people provide over £5.5bn of unpaid care per year and over one in ten young adult carers provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week (Census, 2011).

A caring role can have a significant impact on a young person's experiences, outcomes and long-term life chances. On average:

- Carers miss five per cent of school days because of caring, and caring interferes with a quarter of all school days (Sempik and Becker, 2013, 2014).
- Young adult carers achieve the equivalent of 9 lower GCSE grades compared to their peers. That's the difference between 9 Cs and 9 Ds (The Children's Society, 2013).
- 24% of young adult carers in school say they cannot afford to go to college or university (Carers Trust, 2014).

These barriers to learning result in young adult carers being three times as likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training) compared to other young people the same age. There is also an impact on young adult carers' mental health, with 45% reporting a mental health difficulty (Sempik and Becker, 2013, 2014).

For young adult carers who are able to progress into further learning, caring responsibilities continue to have an impact:

- In college and university, carers miss three days per month and experience disruption to half of their days as a result of caring (Sempik and Becker, 2013, 2014).
- A survey of young adult carers studying at college indicates a 29% drop out rate, which is almost 5 times the current UK average of 6.2% (Sempik and Becker, 2013, 2014).

Aim of the project

Delivered between April 2017 and March 2018, the aim of this project was to provide targeted and intensive one-to-one support to six colleges throughout England, to enable them to develop an effective and embedded whole organisation approach to working with young adult carers.

Funded by the Department for Education (DfE), L&W worked in partnership with the Carers Federation to develop and use the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) as a framework to enable colleges to review, improve and evaluate their provision for young adult carers. Support was provided through face-to-face meetings, telephone consultations and

online practice sharing sessions, which helped colleges to address gaps in their offer and provide effective support to young adult carers throughout their learning journey.

This report provides an overview of the activities carried out through the project, the key findings of the evaluation and case studies of each of the six colleges involved.

Project approach

The aim of this project was to provide targeted and intensive one-to-one support to six colleges throughout England, to enable them to develop an effective and embedded whole organisation approach to working with young adult carers.

In order to achieve this, L&W worked in partnership with the Carers Federation, who had previously developed the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS). The Carers Federation [Quality Standard in Carer Support](#) provides accreditation and training for employers and FE providers to improve the experiences of carers across their organisations. Developed in consultation with carers, the Standard contains eight key points for organisations to work towards:

1. The development and promotion of a **carers policy and strategic commitment**.
2. The identification, support and promotion of a **Designated Member of Staff** for carers.
3. The delivery of **staff training** to raise awareness of young adult carers and their needs.
4. The delivery of **outreach and raising aspiration** activities specifically tailored to young adult carers' needs.
5. Processes to identify young adult carers and promote the support available to them during **student application, enrolment and induction**.
6. The provision of **ongoing support** for young adult carers while they are studying.
7. The development of **partnerships and networking** to support referrals and continuous improvement of support for young adult carers.
8. **Data collection and monitoring** to track the attendance, retention, achievement and progression of young adult carers and inform continuous improvement of support.

Completion of these enables an organisation to evidence a culture of understanding and a commitment to the inclusion and support of carers within their organisations.

For this project, the eight key points included in the Standard were reviewed and adapted to ensure they were directly relevant to the specific needs and experiences of young adult carers. This was informed by a scoping exercise, which identified the specific needs of young adult carers alongside identification of current effective practice with young adult carers in the FE sector. A summary of the revised QSCS framework is included as an annex to this report.

Recruiting colleges

Once the revised Standard was agreed, colleges were contacted through an email communication to L&W's networks and the networks of partner organisations such as the Association of Colleges and the Carers Federation, and invited to express an interest in

participating in the project. In total, 16 expressions of interest were received. In order to decide which colleges were offered a place on the project, applicants were asked to provide a short description of their current support for young adult carers and what they hoped to achieve from their engagement in the project. Expressions of interest were then reviewed according to how advanced their current support was, their ability to make changes and progress within a relatively short timeframe, and the potential impact that the project could have on their support for young adult carers. Other considerations included the location of colleges, to ensure a geographical spread across England.

While the initial plan had been to only work with six colleges, eight were offered the opportunity to receive support. One college declined the invitation; their lead for young adult carers was shortly due to leave and they had not yet recruited a replacement, so felt they could not commit to the project timescales. A second college started the project but, due to staff changes and lack of capacity, withdrew after a few weeks as they also felt unable to make substantial changes within the project timescales.

L&W successfully recruited and supported the following six colleges for the duration of the project:

- Abingdon and Witney College
- Capel Manor College
- Kirklees College
- Newcastle College
- Solihull College
- South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

Support offered to colleges

Each college involved in the project was allocated a key contact at L&W who provided them with intensive, tailored, one-to-one support from October 2017 to January 2018. This consisted of:

- An initial introduction and full briefing on the project.
- Support to complete the action plan included in the QSCS framework. This enabled colleges to review their existing support for young adult carers against the eight key points covered by the Standard, and identify and prioritise actions to take forward within the timeframe of the project.
- A face-to-face meeting to discuss the action plan in depth and agree next steps.
- Regular catch ups by phone to track progress, offer advice and signposting to other examples of effective practice, discuss any challenges arising and ways to overcome these.
- A review meeting, during which the action plan was reviewed, key achievements identified and evidence for their QSCS assessment with the Carers Federation was collated and gathered.

In addition to the one-to-one support, L&W also ran five online group sessions. These were delivered in response to feedback from the colleges who requested opportunities to share effective practice, documents and solutions to common challenges. Two of these sessions focussed on the points of the QSCS framework which colleges identified as being less developed in their provision than the others:

- The development of policies and securing Senior Leadership Team and governor buy-in.
- The identification of young adult carers and data and monitoring.

Each of these sessions involved a short overview of effective practice from L&W, followed by opportunities for colleges to ask questions and share practice.

In addition, two online sessions were held with other colleges which have established strong and comprehensive support for young adult carers. Nottingham College and York College each gave a presentation on the processes and support they have in place for students with caring responsibilities, providing participating colleges with concrete examples of practice that they could introduce in their own contexts and the difference that it can make.

The final online session was run with the Carers Federation and gave colleges an in-depth understanding of the QSCS assessment, the evidence they would be required to present and the subsequent award process.

Evaluation methodology

The evaluation of the project assessed both the process undertaken to support colleges and the outcomes and impact that this had for colleges and for young adult carers.

To capture college's starting points, baseline interviews were carried out with a key contact at each college at the start of their engagement with the project. These interviews focussed on the background to their organisation; their experience of being recruited to the project and the initial support offered; their current provision and support for young adult carers; and what they were hoping to achieve through the project. This was complemented by an analysis of college's action plans to identify the key actions they were intending to take as a result of the project.

At the end of the project, follow-up interviews were undertaken with the same key contact at each college. The aim of these interviews was to identify any changes that colleges had implemented as a result of their participation in the project and the impact these had had for young adult carers. They covered colleges' experiences of the support; their experience of the QSCS assessment; any developments in their provision or support for young adult carers; and any outcomes resulting from the project.

The findings from the interviews informed the development of a case study of each of the colleges involved in the project, demonstrating the changes in their support for young adult carers resulting from the project activities.

Colleges' experiences of the project

This section of the report summarises feedback from key contacts at each college on their experience of the support provided by L&W to participate in the project, and their experience of the QSCS framework and assessment.

The QSCS framework

All six colleges emphasised how important the revised QSCS Framework had been in helping them to review their existing support and identify where improvements were needed. For two of the colleges who were already performing strongly in relation to some areas of the standard, the framework helped them to pinpoint and focus their action plan on particular aspects of support for young adult carers.

"...you know you're doing stuff, but actually, when you see it in a framework like that, you know how much you are doing and what are the gaps." Carers lead

For other colleges, who were earlier in, or at the start of, their journey to develop support for young adult carers, the Framework provided a useful starting point. It helped to give direction about what could be achieved, break the project down into more manageable tasks and prioritise improvement in specific areas.

"Yes I mean it's so thorough it's unbelievable. It's been really good in terms of thinking about all the different areas." Carers lead

The eight-point standard helped colleges to think about all the different aspects of support for young adult carers and pull project activities together;

"I think actually, I found it quite useful looking at all the different areas that impact on support because I think it's very easy to get focussed on two or three... so it was really good to look at holistically, what you need to do to make sure that those things are embedded." Carers lead

One of the colleges had used the Framework as the basis for their agenda at regular project meetings, to update on progress and to identify which part of the Standard they needed to work towards next. Another college had asked their young adult carers to comment on the Framework document and to review their action plan.

The Framework also proved invaluable for all colleges in pointing them towards what sort of evidence was expected and what they needed to collect for the QSCS assessment.

"100%, definitely, like I think that was my bible when I was putting my portfolio together." Carers lead

QSCS Assessment

At the time of interview, four of the colleges had completed their QSCS assessment with the Carers Federation. Assessments for two of the colleges had been postponed due to bad weather.

All colleges received individual, tailored support from their L&W contact to prepare for their assessments. This included, for example, tips on how to prepare for the assessment, ideas on sources and the collection of evidence, and staff to involve in the assessment.

The level of support provided to prepare for assessment was determined by the needs and requirements of the college. The carers lead at one college for example, who was nervous about what to expect during the assessment, requested an additional face to face meeting prior to the assessment, to talk through their action plan in detail and get feedback to confirm that they were ready. Those colleges who had not asked for extra support were confident that help from L&W was available if needed.

All six colleges received a phone call prior to the assessment to check that the college was prepared and had all the evidence they needed.

Three of the colleges found the online group session, led by Carers Federation, on preparing for the assessment particularly helpful. The online session provided an opportunity to ask more specific questions about the assessment, and provided reassurance about what was expected.

“...it was good to understand that it was a commitment to working towards, rather than having achieved everything... and I think the assessment, learning that we could do it in different ways and there was flexibility in that, rather than it has to be this... set approach.” Carers lead

Each of the colleges who had undergone their assessments spoke positively about their experience of the assessment, in particular the informal and supportive approach of the assessors.

All participating colleges have now been assessed and have been successful in achieving the QSCS Standard. The assessment reports for each college are included as separate appendices to this report.

Support from L&W

Overall, colleges were extremely positive about their experience of support for the project from L&W.

“Support has been fantastic. We’ve been able to have some really good discussion around what we’re already doing really well and obviously what we wanted to improve on as part of this project... [we’ve] been able to contact L&W if we needed anything.” Carers lead

The initial meeting was key to provide opportunity to meet their L&W contact in person, to discuss their plans for the project in more detail and identify specific areas of the QSCS Framework where they wanted to improve provision for young adult carers.

“I think that first meeting was crucial to meet in person and get a feel for the college.” Carers lead

Following the initial face-to-face meeting, contact with colleges was maintained via email and telephone calls. The frequency of contact varied from college to college. One college, for example, had a follow up phone call to review their action plan and a final call to check readiness for the assessment, and did not need or expect more contact. Four of the colleges had regular email and phone contact from L&W throughout the project, to check on progress or in response to specific questions or requests for support. One college had an additional face-to-face meeting prior to the assessment. Another felt that they would have liked an additional meeting to give an update on their progress, but struggled to fit this into the timescales of the project.

“Maybe a follow-up meeting, just to kind of say, ‘How are you getting on?’... because obviously things keep coming up... it’s just, kind of, keeping it back on the agenda.” Carers lead

The type of support offered to colleges also varied depending on their starting points and aims for the project. One college was looking to develop links with local authority carers services and requested a list of carers services across London to help them with this. As this list did not exist, L&W instead provided advice on how they could find the information they needed and start contacting services.

In general, colleges were happy with the level and type of support provided by L&W but one college had understood the project to involve more direct support in planning and developing their support for young adult carers. In practice they felt that support had been focused on managing their participation in the project rather than actively developing support, but recognised that they may have misunderstood the purpose of the work at the outset. This highlights the importance of clarity about the support on offer and the aims of a project when recruiting participants.

In comparison, the other colleges were pleased with the level of support they had received and were confident that additional support was available if they asked for it.

“[I] didn’t have an expectation [of support] so was a case of asking when I wanted something or needed some help with something, or needed some reassurance. It was useful just to have the reassurance that we were going in the right direction.” Carers lead

“Always had a response to questions from L&W and have been guided through the project.” Carers lead

Zoom sessions and networking

The online group sessions were highly valued by participating colleges as a way of learning what stage other colleges were at, in their provision for young adult carers, how different colleges were approaching things, and as a way of sharing good practice. This was particularly helpful for colleges whose current provision for young adult carers was less developed.

The focus on specific themes for each session, highlighting different areas of the QSCS standards, and input from other colleges already recognised as providing strong and comprehensive support for young adult carers, was identified as particularly helpful:

“I think that was really quite useful and I think especially when we got to a point as a group where we were sort of exchanging practice and being able to share resources that we’ve created... it’s just useful to see kind of, I guess, where other people are with their thinking and what the general consensus is on stuff and actually, I think it can be useful for highlighting other needs that maybe we hadn’t thought of.” Carers lead

“[It] gives everyone a platform to speak very honestly about the things that they found difficult and the things that they found easy... [It was a] really nice platform for us to be able to not only share experiences but also share things like policies, and what has worked at different colleges.” Carers lead

One college noted that the online sessions served to motivate the staff responsible for delivering the project and so helped to keep plans moving forward.

“What I’ve noticed was the huge momentum each time... projects like this can stall so easily, can’t they, if there isn’t that buzz created and I’ve noticed [from staff] attending online sessions that it’s actually created that.” Vice Principal

A carers lead at one of the colleges had been unable to attend the online group sessions, due to planned work commitments, but was able to access recordings of the sessions, provided by L&W, to watch in their own time. Two of the colleges had experienced technical issues which meant they were unable to access all of the live sessions (although they accessed the recordings later).

Despite these issues, all six colleges agreed that online was the best way to facilitate networking between participating colleges, as work schedules and the spread of colleges across the country meant it was difficult to bring everybody together face-to-face. The carers lead at another college felt it would have been beneficial, as part of the project, to visit other colleges delivering effective support for young adult carers but recognised that this was difficult within the timescales of the project.

As well as the online sessions, one college suggested that an online platform to share resources could also have been useful. During the project, some of the colleges had shared relevant documents, for example crisis plans and pattern of care forms by email.

“It might be good if we had, like, a toolkit of some sort where you could go in and put things and then people could dip into it... So if I was working on something and it had particularly worked well, if I had somewhere else I could drop it in to share with the other colleges then that would be good. I think you’d be more likely to do that than potentially email everybody.” Carers lead

Outside of the online sessions some colleges also contacted each other and shared information and resources via email. This additional networking was facilitated by L&W through the sharing of participants' contact details. Two of the colleges commented that it would have been useful to have contact details for other participants, with consent, earlier in the project to facilitate this additional method of networking, but once they received these they found it very useful to speak to one another.

Challenges to participating in the project

Two of the colleges identified the relatively short project timescales as a challenge, particularly if their provision for young adult carers was limited at the start of the project, for example if no policy was in place. Assessment in May (rather than February/March) was suggested as a more realistic timescale to give colleges longer to embed some of their plans and review their impact, but could not be conducted due to the timescales of the project.

Another college pointed to the fact that the project was delivered during the busiest term for colleges and that later in the year, perhaps January to April, may be better for future work. Two colleges also highlighted challenges in finding time to work on the project on top of their existing roles, particularly if the lead works part-time. In one college, the project had taken over a major part of the working day, but this was not necessarily viewed as a negative outcome, as it meant that the needs of young adult carers were being identified and addressed.

“Actually what it's done is shown a great need, and that need's only going to get bigger. It's about whether or not we can meet it and do a good enough job really. The work we've done has generated more work, which, you know, I expected really.” Carers lead

Two colleges also identified issues in getting the project on the agenda with governors, in one case due to the slow-moving college machinery and in another due to a change in Vice Principal, highlighting the importance of securing senior leadership team support and commitment in order to move the project forward quickly.

Progress made as a result of the project

Colleges' progress in developing their support for young adult carers was measured against the eight key points of the QSCS framework: carers policy and strategic commitment; designated member of staff; staff training; outreach and raising aspirations; student induction; ongoing support; partnerships and networking; and data collection and monitoring. This section presents the progress that colleges made against each of these points in turn.

Carers policy and strategic commitment

This part of the QSCS framework was a key area of development for all but one of the colleges involved in the project. Prior to their involvement, the five participating colleges all had some support in place for young adult carers, but had concerns that this was not consistent across their organisation. As such, these colleges were keen to develop a strategic, whole-organisation approach to ensure that all young adult carers were being offered the same support and opportunities, no matter which curriculum area they were studying in. The college who did not prioritise this area of the framework already had established policies and procedures in place for young adult carers and good senior management support for their work with this group.

Through the project, two of the colleges developed an organisational policy on supporting young adult carers, while another two reviewed and updated their existing policies to ensure they addressed young adult carers' needs. This work was carried out by the lead member of staff for supporting carers in each of the colleges and was seen as a useful starting point to identify the support that the college currently offered, and where this could be improved. These new or updated college policies were then approved by colleges' senior management teams and governing boards, and disseminated to staff and also students.

Across these colleges, the process of developing or reviewing the college policy was also viewed as a useful way of starting to secure senior management buy-in for the support team's work with young adult carers. The carers lead in these colleges tended to be based in learner services and worked with the head of their team to get the policy on the senior management team's agenda. In two of the colleges, the carers lead was able to work closely with a Vice Principal to secure senior management buy-in and embed the changes made to their support offer in college processes and procedures. One college also secured the principal's support by requesting that a comms piece about the changes in support available to all carers be sent to all staff through the principal's office. Securing senior management support for the project was seen by carers leads as crucial in ensuring that changes could be made quickly and that they were sustained and embedded across their organisations.

"...having a conversation with a head of department, someone in SMT, whoever it might be who's going to need to make those changes, to make sure that they are willing to give this a try... because, like I say, if you haven't got management on board, then the necessary changes are not going to be embedded." Carers lead

Two of the colleges also made good progress in securing buy-in from their governors. One college identified a link governor for carers, and the carers lead met with them to talk through

the support they have in place for this group and their plans for the college. The second college included an item about young adult carers on the governing board's agenda to raise their awareness of these young people and the work the college was doing through the project. Again, this was viewed as important in sustaining any changes made through the project and in embedding an organisational approach to supporting young adult carers.

Designated Member of Staff

Of the six colleges engaged in the project, four already had a designated member of staff for carers prior to their involvement. The remaining two identified a carer's lead through their work on the project. In each of the colleges, the carers lead has been the main member of staff responsible for delivering the project and for implementing the changes needed to secure the QSCS accreditation.

All of the colleges had used the project to promote the details of their carers leads, both internally to staff and students, and externally to partner organisations. For example, one college had a lead member of staff for carers in each of their campuses but did not promote their details to students or staff. As a result, it was not well known that young adult carers could access additional support. By promoting the details of their carers leads, the college not only ensured that there was a main point of contact for carers and staff, but also found that more young adult carers self-identified as they realised they could access tailored support.

"...the designated member of staff, we know that that's myself and my counterpart at [our other campus], but that wasn't actually made quite explicit anywhere. It was in our policy but for external people to know that, so it was making those things more explicit about who it was." (Carers lead)

Having explicit leads for young adult carers had also enabled colleges to run awareness raising sessions with staff, give inputs at student meetings, deliver presentations at induction sessions about the support on offer to young adult carers, and make links with other teams within the college, such as the finance and school liaison teams, to improve support.

Having one key contact for carers (including young adult carers) had also enabled colleges to improve their links with relevant external organisations, most notably carers services, but also local authorities and other local providers.

Staff training

All of the participating colleges delivered staff training and/or awareness raising activities as part of the project. Three colleges developed or bought in online training packages on the needs of young adult carers for new staff to complete as part of their induction. The carers leads in each of the colleges also undertook various awareness raising activities, including presentations at team meetings and emails out to staff.

Four of the colleges delivered, or planned to deliver, face-to-face training with staff in different roles – they tended to focus on staff in learner support roles initially and then expanded this to include curriculum staff. Three of the colleges involved their local carers service in this training and one was exploring the possibility of supporting some of their

young adult carers to deliver future awareness raising sessions with staff. One college had also delivered training on young adult carers to their student union representatives, so they could ensure that their support needs were heard in future meetings and activities.

By the end of the project, the staff training and awareness raising activities delivered by the carers leads were already resulting in increased identification of young adult carers and improved confidence amongst staff to provide appropriate support.

“So, in her talk, [the Schools Liaison Officer] goes around to the local schools and talks to them about what the college has to offer. As part of that, she talks about what we offer specifically to young adult carers... and that we’re a college that, you know, will proactively support them.” Carers lead

Outreach and raising aspirations

The most common action that participating colleges had taken under this point on the QSCS framework was to promote the support they offer to young adult carers on their website, prospectuses and marketing materials. The aim of this was to highlight the fact that young adult carers were welcome and would be well-supported while at college, and also to encourage young people to disclose their caring responsibilities.

During the project, the carers lead in one college had worked closely with their School Liaison Officer to increase their awareness of young adult carers’ needs. Together, they reviewed the materials used in presentations and materials for prospective students and ensured that these explicitly mentioned the support available to young adult carers at the college. These would then be used in the School Liaison Officer’s work in the summer term, which focussed on outreach and aspiration raising in local schools.

One college had developed considerable transition support for young adult carers through the project. They have started to record the details of young people attending the college’s open days and information sessions, including, if they are happy to disclose, whether they are a carer. Young adult carers who are identified at this stage and go on to apply to the college will be invited to a Keep Warm event during the summer. This will introduce them to the college campus and environment, supporting their transition into Further Education.

“The pastoral team have always done that anyway but we’ll probably tailor that more to young adult carers to get them into the college in the summer, before they actually start in September, again, talking about the support that’s going to be available to them.” Carers lead

Student application, enrolment and induction

Two of the colleges involved in the project already included a question in their application or enrolment forms asking whether students had caring responsibilities. One of these revised the wording of this question through the project, as the carers lead realised that they needed to ask more specifically about caring responsibilities, in order to avoid parents ticking this box. A further three colleges added a question about caring to their application and/or enrolment forms as a result of participating in the project. Two colleges also added a

question about caring responsibilities to their application forms for financial support, as an additional opportunity for young adult carers to disclose.

To further support the early identification of young adult carers, one college ran awareness raising activities with staff who supported the application process, to help them identify young adult carers. Another college developed a crib sheet about carers for enrolment staff to use with students, with the aim of identifying more young adult carers at this stage.

“I think when [students] tick the box, they don’t often know what that means, because they don’t often identify themselves as [a carer], because it’s just something that they do, isn’t it, and it’s part of their life? So, it was just saying, ‘Oh, could you just read this and if you feel that is yourself, could you tick the box and then actually come and see one of our team?’... then we’ve got them on our books from the very early stages.” Carers lead

Colleges also took steps to promote their support for young adult carers at enrolment and induction. For example, support staff included information on this in their presentations to new students, attended fresher’s fairs and gave out information on the support available to young adult carers, and included the information in induction booklets or on the student intranet. The aim of this was to further support identification by giving students a reason to disclose their caring responsibilities. These approaches were all successful in supporting the identification of young adult carers, with all colleges reporting increased numbers since the project began.

“I’ve got data that goes back to 15-16, we knew of five, in 16-17, we knew of eleven, and this year, we know of 42. So, that’s the impact the project has [had]... It’s only, about, you know, 32 young people, but it’s important. They’re 30 or 40 young people that we didn’t know about.” Carers lead

Colleges also reviewed the processes they had in place once young adult carers were identified. One college adapted a [‘pattern of care’ form](#) provided by L&W and another asked learners to complete a student needs form, while three other colleges had face-to-face meetings or interviews with identified young adult carers. All of these processes aimed to find out more about students’ level and intensity of caring responsibilities, the potential impact on their college experience and the support they would find most useful, so that staff could develop individual support and crisis plans for young adult carers.

Ongoing support

The majority of the colleges involved in the project had strong and comprehensive support in place for their learners, including young adult carers. However, this was often fairly generic and little was tailored to the specific needs of young adult carers. Where tailored support existed, it was often not promoted across the college and so students and staff alike tended to be unaware that young adult carers could receive specific support to help with their studies.

Through the project, colleges were able to review the support they provided to young adult carers, start to address identified gaps and promote the specific support available to this

group across their organisations. Three colleges developed individual support plans to use with learners once they were identified as young adult carers. This enabled them to tailor support to each young person's needs and reduce the likelihood of a crisis occurring. One college developed their support plan template in consultation with young adult carers.

"...we went to [the carers service], I guess, just to get a feel for... what they would find useful and what barriers they felt they had in college and in school. Just as a kind of baseline for the beginning of the project, what we could maybe be looking at implementing and what would they want with the card. So, from that, we decided to make a young adult carers support plan." Carers lead

Another college also developed a crisis plan so that young adult carers knew what to do if they had an emergency at home.

Two colleges used the project to introduce a young carers card for students with caring responsibilities. The cards will be issued to learners who support staff have confirmed as young adult carers. They can show these to their teachers or other staff to access additional support, without having to disclose their particular circumstances multiple times.

"We're about to implement a young carers card. We've developed it and designed it, and young carers have been part of that... This will enable them, perhaps, to be able to keep their phone on in lessons, ask for extensions, and make that whole process a little easier without having to go into a lot of detail with members of staff that they may not want to." Carers lead

A key area that colleges developed through the project was young adult carers' access to financial support. Three colleges managed to include young adult carers as a priority group for the discretionary part of the 16-19 Bursary as a result of the Zoom session with York College. These carers leads also spoke to their financial teams to raise their awareness of the wide range of equipment and expenses that young adult carers may need financial support with, in order to attend and achieve at college.

"...because the financial thing is that, you know, it has to be for college for their academic benefit, so when I had conversations it was like they need money for that because if they were smelling or if they have holes in their shoes, they wouldn't come to college. Also, then there's the financial implication that they need to take their siblings, so therefore they need extra costs. That was really good because then we were able to say, 'Actually, yes, let's try and find them some more money,' so we did." Carers lead

In addition, some of the colleges had reviewed the criteria that learners need to meet in order to claim the Bursary, and were starting to introduce flexibilities around these for young adult carers.

"One of the things that I am looking at for the future is, we have an attendance figure that they have to achieve in order to get their finance. Obviously, that's quite difficult for young carers, there are lots of issues. I think, at the moment, it's

something like 86%. I'm trying to negotiate that, for young carers, it gets dropped to 76%.” Carers lead

Much of the rest of colleges' activities in this area involved promoting the support available to young adult carers in their organisations. This included: adding information to the college intranet, social media pages and website; putting up posters with information about support and the details of the carers lead; creating leaflets and placing these in communal areas; running stalls with carers services; and running activities on Young Carers Awareness Day. By the end of the project, colleges felt that there was a much greater awareness of the support available to young adult carers amongst both staff and students, which in turn had supported the identification of students with caring responsibilities.

Partnerships and networking

Colleges established and strengthened a number of different partnerships as a result of their participation in the project. Each of the six colleges spoke about developing relationships with local carers services. Four colleges already had strong partnerships in place with at least one carers service but the project enabled them to develop these further and engage carers services in new ways; for example, through the delivery of staff training, attendance at freshers fairs or facilitating a young adult carer peer support group. One college put formal information sharing agreements in place with each of the three carers services they worked with, which facilitated a two-way referral process for young adult carers into and out of the college.

“...they'd come to our freshers fair in September already but what we did then was have another meeting and, kind of, put some things on the agenda about information sharing and how we would refer and stuff. So, that was useful because we sit over three local authorities... so we met with them to establish and make sure that we know how to share information.” Carers lead

In addition, three colleges established new partnerships with carers services that they had not worked with previously. These colleges involved carers services in reviews of their support offer to young adult carers to ensure that it was comprehensive and would meet young people's needs. This enabled colleges to put in place new support for young adult carers – for example, peer support groups – as well as review and strengthen their existing support offer to students with caring responsibilities.

Colleges also built networks with other relevant organisations and services. One college developed a partnership with a local authority which provided access to an online training package for their staff. Another started to develop their relationships with local schools to improve their identification of young adult carers progressing to college at the beginning of the academic year. In addition, and as discussed in the support section above, all of the colleges had positively engaged with one another to share practice, resources and advice to improve support for young adult carers.

One of the colleges that had a good level of support in place at the beginning of the project had worked with their local carers service to establish a local network of organisations

involved in supporting young adult carers. The network consists of four local colleges and two carers services and it aims to help providers share best practice and troubleshoot any challenges they are experiencing.

“We’ve arranged a network meeting with a few other colleges and with the two, sort of, lead carer services, which are Barnardo’s and Carers Count, where we are, so we can share what work we’re doing and where we’re struggling and help each other out.” Carers lead

Data collection and monitoring

One of the colleges already had arrangements in place to monitor the attendance, retention, achievement and progression of their young adult carers prior to their involvement in the project. For the other five, this was an area they aimed to improve through their work towards the QSCS award.

By the end of the project, all of the colleges had established processes to collect and monitor data on their identified young adult carers as a separate group from other vulnerable learners. While the numbers in these cohorts are relatively small in each college, this data collection and monitoring still enables them to compare these students’ progress with other groups and check that they are accessing the support they need in order to achieve.

“We anticipated it all being a small sample size but we wanted to, sort of, monitor their achievement compared to non-young adult carers. So, what we’ve done mid-year is we’ve started to look at it already.... So, we’re looking at how well that they’re actually attending and how well the retention looks currently for those students and whether there’s any intervention we can put in place rather than wait until the end of the year and realise that we’ve lost half of them, then evaluate it as not being great.” Carers lead

Two colleges had also started cross-cutting their data on young adult carers by demographics – such as gender, ethnicity and disability – to identify whether they need to do any targeted work with particular groups to support identification and ensure they are accessing the support they need.

“On this year’s figures, we’ve been able to do gender, age, ethnicity and widening participation and primary disability... I could use this – and I think this is quite important – to demonstrate to our staff that, actually, these young people have multiple issues. Not only are they a young carer, significant numbers of them themselves will have health and disability problems. That, I think, will be quite useful to be able to show to people.”
Carers lead

Colleges had also started reporting on data about their young adult carers to colleagues in team meetings, to their senior management teams and to their governors. The evidence from their data monitoring had successfully enabled some colleges to secure further buy-in from senior staff to implement additional support for young adult carers.

“When they apply for student finance, there is a box on the finance form that asks them if they’re a young carer. I did a bit of analysis of the 42 that I knew of, only twenty of them applied for their finance, 22 of them hadn’t. Of the twenty that had applied for their finance, fifteen of them had got issues of attendance, so they weren’t being paid. I can use that data to, sort of, talk to the management... I’ve got some evidence to back it up.” Carers lead

Outcomes

Participation in the project resulted in a range of positive outcomes for the colleges involved. Each of the participating colleges identified that the project provided the impetus needed to review and improve their support and provision for young adult carers.

“I think the project indirectly, in a way, was a catalyst for us to make changes in our support.” Carers lead

“The project and, in particular, working towards the Standard has given the college a focus on where they needed to improve.” Carers lead

Colleges’ success in developing policies and organisational commitments to young adult carers have resulted in strong buy-in from senior management and governors, and whole-organisation approaches to supporting this group. This has been crucial in ensuring that any changes made will be sustained and embedded across their organisations.

The majority of the colleges involved in the project have reported a rapid increase in the number of young adult carers identified amongst their student cohort (one reported nearly a 400% increase from their monitoring data). This was achieved through the promotion of their carers leads and the support available to young adult carers; improved links and referral processes with carers services and other relevant organisations; and the delivery of staff training and awareness activities, which improved staff’s confidence to identify young adult carers and refer them to the carers lead.

Each college has developed more comprehensive and tailored support for young adult carers across their curriculum areas. Much of this is due to the work of the carers leads in reviewing the support available and adapting this to meet the needs of young adult carers, often in consultation with young people themselves. Staff training and awareness raising has also helped tutors to take a more consistent approach in offering support to young adult carers across different curriculum areas. As a result, young adult carers in each of the colleges are able to access a wider range of tailored support to help them attend and achieve in FE.

Colleges felt that the increased promotion of their support for young adult carers and the external recognition of this through the QSCS award will make them a more attractive option for future students and their parents/carers.

“Having the quality standard will... make it clearer that actually, we do provide good support for young adult carers and so it may get to the point that students choose us over other colleges as a result of that.” Carers lead

Improved data collection and monitoring means that colleges now: have a clearer idea of how many young adult carers they have in their learner cohort and who these young people are; can track young adult carers’ attendance, retention and achievement and identify any additional support required in-year, before young people reach a crisis or drop out; and have the evidence needed to make the case to senior management for additional support or flexibility to be implemented for this group.

Finally, there were positive outcomes for the staff members involved in delivering the project, resulting from the improvements they made to their support for young adult carers. This led to an improvement in their satisfaction with their work and role in the college.

“I have really enjoyed it. It is really satisfying. It’s probably been the most satisfying piece of work I’ve done in a long time... actually seeing the help first hand, for want of a better description, at the coal-face, making a real difference to those young people, it’s very satisfying.” Carers lead

Case studies

Abingdon and Witney College

About the college

Abingdon and Witney College is a general further education college based across three sites in Abingdon, Witney and Common Leys. They offer a wide range of provision to learners of all ages, including full-time and part-time FE programmes, HE courses and apprenticeships.

At the beginning of their involvement in the Targeted Support for Colleges project, the college was aware of 20 young adult carers studying with them. However, they knew from national statistics that the actual number would be much higher than this and that they needed to establish consistent ways of identifying and recording the numbers of young adult carers attending the college. In particular, the college wanted to encourage young adult carers to self-identify and declare their caring responsibilities to staff, so that they could then provide appropriate support.

In addition, while the college had a relatively comprehensive support offer in place for young adult carers, this was not formally recognised in any of the college's processes and awareness of these young people's needs varied across staff. As a result, the support that young adult carers received at the college depended on their tutors' awareness and understanding of their situation and the support they could access, which tended to be patchy. One of the college's aims in getting involved in the project was therefore to raise awareness of the college's support for young adult carers amongst staff, including senior management and curriculum staff, to ensure consistency in the support that these young people accessed.

Provision for young adult carers

The college has used the QSCS framework to review the support it offers to young adult carers throughout their learning journey. While they already had much of the recommended support in place, the college has found the project very useful in developing and updating their policies and procedures on supporting young adult carers, and in securing senior management buy-in for this.

As part of the project, the Student Advisor who leads on carers has reviewed and updated the college's protocol on supporting young adult carers. This includes information for staff on who young adult carers are, the challenges they may face and the impact a caring role might have on their experience of college. It also includes information on the college's procedures for identifying young adult carers, the academic adjustments that tutors can put in place for student carers, the pastoral support they can access, safeguarding and information sharing, and the contact details of the college's carers lead. As well as a version for staff, the Student Advisor has developed a version of their protocol which helps students to understand the support young adult carers can access and provides contact details of the carer's lead and local services. This is available for both current and potential students on the college's [website](#) and intranet.

“...we’ve got one for staff, like I said, but I’ve also done a student version, which we’ve put on the college website and it’s very much, ‘This is our ethos towards young adult carers’.” Student Advisor

The project has also been a catalyst for the carer’s lead to meet with senior management and secure their buy-in for the college’s support for young adult carers. One of the college’s vice principals has been closely involved in reviewing and updating the college’s protocol on supporting young adult carers, and provided the carer’s lead with valuable advice on the procedures the college can put in place to support young adult carers to apply for Carer’s Allowance. The draft protocol has been approved by the college’s senior management team and will now be distributed across the college to students and staff with their support.

“I think having management on board is, like it says in the standards, it’s really important. You can’t do any of this without having a supportive management team, and we’ve really seen the benefits of having that.”
Student Advisor

The carer’s lead has also met with the college’s Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare governor to discuss the project and the college’s support for young adult carers. The governor now includes young adult carers as part of their remit as it was recognised that there are many developmental needs and personal needs that come with caring. Subsequently, the college’s support for young adult carers was included as an item on a meeting of the college board, which has further secured senior management buy-in. This has been crucial in gaining the cross-organisational awareness that the carer’s lead was hoping for.

Another key change that the college implemented through the project was a review of their student support needs form, which learners complete during their interview. Prior to the project, the college included a question on the form which asked whether students were carers. However, they found that this question was often misinterpreted and therefore resulted in an inaccurate picture of the number of carers studying at the college. Through the project, the college revised this question to ask whether students looked after a friend or family member, with a follow-up question to ask for some details. If a student ticks this box, they will then have a meeting with the carer’s lead who can follow this up in more depth and find out what support they may need.

“It was also as well, even if they didn’t want support at that point, making them aware of what was available, should they need it in future... Letting them know how to access that, should they need it, who to speak to, but saying at the end of the day, we’re not going to make you. We want you to learn that skill of independence and being able to ask for help when you need it.” Student Advisor

Finally, the college already had strong links with the local carers service, Carers Oxfordshire, but used the project as an opportunity to invite them in to run awareness-raising training for their Student Performance managers and academic staff. This is due to take place in the summer term.

Challenges

The main challenge the college faced when delivering the project was a lack of time to make changes. The staff involved already had full-time jobs and the nature of their work in safeguarding meant that they could never be sure how much time they would have to commit to the project in any one day. However, having the senior management on board meant that the project was considered when work was allocated across the team, so the Student Advisor who led on the work was given fewer cases to support during the project timeframe. This freed up some time for them to meet with the governor, review the college's protocol and amend the student support needs form.

Involving young adult carers in making decisions about changes was also a challenge for the college. The Student Advisor tried to get their feedback on their experiences and input on activities for Young Carers Awareness Day but had no response to the messages they sent out to students. They felt that this may be because students want to focus on their courses and college life, and may be reluctant to engage in discussions about their caring role unless they need support. This is an area that the college will continue to work on.

Outcomes

The main outcome of the project has been the increased awareness amongst staff at all levels, which is already resulting in young adult carers being offered more consistent support across the college.

"I think it's been raising the profile amongst other staff, because I've been a lot more vocal about it, over the last few months. I think it's been making other staff aware of the adjustments that we can make for these students, so they then offer them more readily." Student Advisor

Additionally, the college already had good support in place but the QSCS award will enable them to promote this externally to potential students and wider services.

"I think us having this quality standard will strengthen that and it will make it clearer that we do provide good support for young adult carers and so, it may get to the point that actually, students choose us over other colleges as a result of that." Student Advisor

Success factors

- Gaining strong senior management buy-in has been key in raising awareness of staff across the college and embedding the changes made through the project, ensuring their sustainability.
- The QSCS assessment pack has provided the college with a comprehensive framework against which they could review their support and identify areas for development, which has enabled them to focus on strategic approaches and senior management buy-in.

Capel Manor College

About the college

Capel Manor is a land-based Further Education college with around 3000 students, just over 800 of which are 16-18 year olds. The main site is in Enfield, North London, with additional sites in Crystal Palace, however students attend the college from boroughs across the Greater London area. The college specialises in courses including animal management, horticulture and landscaping, garden design, arboriculture and countryside, floristry and balloon artistry and saddlery and leatherwork.

At the start of the project, only two young adult carers, among the student population, had been identified. The college did not have systems in place to identify, record or monitor information about young adult carers, and no designated staff specifically to support them. The college did not have a policy on young adult carers and staff awareness was considered to be low. Recognising that they were starting from 'ground zero', Capel Manor embraced the Targeted Support for Colleges project to learn from what other colleges were doing, and above all, to identify what they needed to do on their 'journey' to improve support for young adult carers.

Capel Manor used a task-force approach, involving staff in different roles and at different levels, to drive their plans forward. This included staff involved in the development of college systems, registration, student services, the senior leadership team and governors. The Vice-Principal has been actively involved in ensuring the project has a profile and buy-in from senior management. At operational level, the Lead Mentor has played a central role in developing policies and linking together the different aspects of the project.

Being able to identify young adult carers and making links to support agencies, close to where identified young adult carers live in the Greater London area, were key aims in the college's plans for improvement. Overall, the aim was;

"...to empower [young adult carers] to be able to know that they can come into college and it's somewhere for them and that they have the support to be able to... enjoy doing their work and come out with a qualification, without having all that extra stress and worry, and not feeling like they're on their own." Vice-Principal

Provision for young adult carers

The college has made swift progress across many different aspects of support. To move quickly, the college developed a discrete young adult carers policy, using ideas from other colleges, soon after the project started. Longer term, the plan is to embed this within broader Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding strategies.

The Lead Mentor has been identified as the designated lead and is the go-to person for any learner who discloses a caring responsibility or who is identified as a young adult carer.

The college has worked hard to raise awareness about young adult carers among all staff, working with a local young adult carers' service, Enfield young People in Caring (EyPIC), to

deliver awareness training to heads of school in different curriculum areas and to staff across all centres at the college's careers development day. 'Young adult carers' has been added as an agenda item at student meeting groups and the Lead Mentor attends to provide updates on progress. EyPIC have also offered to work with Capel Manor to run a peer support group for young adult carers at lunchtimes. If successful, this will be rolled out to other centres at the college.

One of the first actions the college took was to add a tick box on the enrolment form to help to identify new students with caring responsibilities. If the box is ticked, students are automatically sent for an additional needs interview, so that support (financial and wider) can be agreed and put in place if required. Staff who might be dealing with students at the enquiry stage are trained to recognise things that a young person might say, that may identify them as a young adult carer.

If a student with caring responsibilities is not identified at the start of their time in college, there are other opportunities for them to disclose their caring role or for it to emerge through conversations with different staff. Prompts to encourage disclosure which have been introduced include: posters in all centres; information on the student portal, including details of carers services; and the carers commitment form.

One of the main areas of improvement since the project began is the provision of financial support for young adult carers. The college developed a form for young adult carers to complete. One of the aims of the form is to help to build a picture of the extent of the young person's caring commitments. This has resulted in the prioritisation of young adult carers for the discretionary strand of the 16-19 Bursary.

In addition, young adult carers have been added as a separate category to achievement gap data. Although this is currently a small sample size, the college is monitoring the attendance and retention of young adult carers, compared to other groups of students, at the mid-year point, to identify whether any interventions are required and the most effective way of putting additional support in place.

Challenges

The main challenge has been locating and developing links with carers services outside of Enfield; the college believes that ideally, support for young adult carers needs to be close to where they live rather than close to where they study. Approaches have been made to invite carers services from other boroughs, including in Hounslow, Brentford and Islington, to come into college to run events for young adult carers similar to those run by EyPIC. However, carers services in these areas are not always funded to deliver to colleges outside of the borough.

Outcomes

Feedback from young adult carers on the new commitment form suggests that the support put in place through the project is making a real difference to students.

"...one of the biggest things they all say is, 'you're listening and you understand and I don't need to keep telling my story.'" Student

The project has provided the college with the opportunity and tools to look in detail at every aspect of a young adult carer's learner journey. The college is confident that the needs of young adult carers are now embedded into the development of every policy. The new weather management policy for example, cites special consideration for vulnerable groups of students, including young adult carers, to allow them to leave early to make sure they can get home safely to the people they care for. This is important in reassuring young adult carers that the college understands their responsibilities and the vital role they play in caring for family members.

The success of the project has resulted in increased numbers of young adult carers being known to the college (from two to twenty). Whilst Capel Manor recognises this as a 'good problem to have', longer-term the college is exploring ways to ensure that they can continue to resource and sustain support for young adult carers. The college aims to ensure that it is seen as a welcoming and supportive environment where young adult carers can achieve and progress; that all young adult carers are identified, and that comprehensive and tailored support is available to meet young adult carers' needs.

Success factors

- Having a 'task-force' in different roles and with different responsibilities, rather than a single identified lead, has provided commitment at all levels of the college and helped to drive the project forward.
- Developing a discrete young adult carer policy during the initial stage has enabled the college to implement key actions quickly.
- Monitoring and reporting the numbers of young adult carers at the college and collecting specific achievement gap data has provided a focus that triggers intervention, if required.

Kirklees College

About the College

Kirklees College is a Further Education college offering vocational education to students aged 16+. The college has more than 18,000 students across full-time and part-time courses and apprenticeships. The college has nine sites covering the whole of the Kirklees region in West Yorkshire, including two main centres in Huddersfield and Dewsbury.

Students are drawn predominantly from the local population but also come from the Calderdale area and from Bradford. At the start of the project, the college had identified about 40 young adult carers, aged 16-19, within the student cohort, but were aware that there were likely to be more within such a large student population.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team Leader has overall responsibility for vulnerable students, including young adult carers. Within the team, a Care Coordinator works with progress coaches to support young adult carers on a day-to-day basis. On taking up the post, the Team Leader identified a lack of clear guidance, and structure, within the college, to support young adult carers, and had begun to develop guidance and recommendations on what needed to be put in place to address this.

Although they were performing strongly in some areas such as data collection and analysis – i.e. retention, success and monitoring rates - the Team Leader recognised that in other areas there was still some way to go, and saw the Targeted Support for Colleges project as an opportunity to get advice around how to implement their plans.

A key focus of Kirklees' project was to raise awareness amongst staff of the needs of young adult carers, and to find ways to ensure the message was reaching as wide an audience as possible across such a large organisation. By improving the provision for young adult carers, the Team Leader also hoped to make Kirklees an attractive option for young adult carers, where they could be confident that they would get the support they need to succeed. Plans to ensure that individualised support plans are in place from the start of a young adult carers' time at college was seen as crucial to this.

“For us, it’s about their journey...that’s ultimately our overall goal, to retain them in college ...so that they can pass their course and be successful into adulthood and whatever it might be that they want to do, that they can achieve it, and know they can achieve it, and not limit themselves.” Team Leader

Provision for young adult carers

Since the project began, the college has begun to develop an online training package for staff to raise awareness around young adult carers and the support available to them. This includes, for example, things to look out for that might suggest a student has caring responsibilities.

The Team Leader delivers this information as a presentation to all new staff as part of the corporate induction process and has also arranged to deliver a training session on support

for young adult carers at team meetings for progress coaches. Future plans include training for wider curriculum staff. In addition, the college's safeguarding policy has been updated, to include an extensive guide for staff on supporting young adult carers, and has been made available to staff online.

The college has introduced several changes to provide more opportunities for disclosure, and to ensure young adult carers can access the support they want or need.

These include changes to the enrolment process for 2018/19. Enrolment staff will have a 'crib' sheet to use with young people to help them to self-identify as a young adult carer. Students will then be invited to make an appointment with the EDI Team to ensure they are receiving support, both from within the college, and from local carers' services, from the early stages of their course.

A new 'pattern of care form' adapted from a version provided by another college participating in the project, captures information about the young adult carer's caring responsibilities, the extent of their caring and how it might affect their college course. This information is used to inform the development of a crisis plan – key actions that the young adult carer and the college will take if a crisis situation occurs. The Care Co-ordinator and the Progress Coach complete the form together with the young adult carer. One young adult carer, who had been struggling to attend college, came in with his mum to talk through the plan and identify where support was needed. The plan is reviewed regularly, and this has proved to be very effective in improving the situation for the young person.

Following discussion about the Targeted Support for Colleges project with Carers Count and Barnardo's, the two lead carers' services in the area, the EDI team have arranged the first meeting of a new network of carers services and local colleges, to learn about project findings, work to improve support for young adult carers, and to share good practice.

Challenges

The one aspect of improving support that has proved to be a challenge is bringing young adult carers together, in a group, to inform policy. Young people's varying timetables and additional commitments outside of college, made it challenging to find a day and time when they were all available to meet face-to-face. The Team Lead plans to approach a small number of young adult carers, already active in the student union, to explore if they would be willing to take a lead on this and promote a young adult carers group to other students.

Staff awareness and training about young adult carers was the other big challenge. This was relatively low at the start of the project and so it was difficult to get some staff on board. However, the college has made good progress with this within the relatively short timescale of the project and has plans in place to develop training further.

Outcomes

Involvement in the project, and in particular, working towards the QSCS, has helped the college to break down the different aspects of support and focus improvement where it was most needed.

The college's commitment to supporting young adult carers, has increased levels of awareness across the college. More opportunities for young adult carers to disclose has been identified as one of the main benefits of the project. The commitment of the senior leadership team, particularly the assistant principal, who has responsibility for EDI, has helped to drive progress forward.

"I think the awareness raising has been the biggest thing... that we do acknowledge as a college, and we have a commitment to the fact, that we understand people do have caring responsibilities and we're here to support them with that." Team Leader

In March, Kirklees won a Times Educational Supplement (TES) Award for their support for vulnerable groups, including young adult carers. Both TES and OFSTED, in a recent inspection, commented on the college's use of data to inform improvements in support leading to a narrowing of the achievement gap for these groups of students.

Success factors

- Commitment from the senior leadership team, particularly from the assistant principal with responsibility for this area has made a big difference. The carers lead sits on the college's strategic group for equality, diversity and inclusion and this has also helped to get senior management on board and to take the project forward.
- Introduction of staff training about the needs of young adult carers has been important in raising awareness and ensuring that good support is in place.
- Formal mechanisms for identifying young adult carers and understanding their needs has enabled the college provide support that is tailored to individuals, this includes new enrolment processes, a 'crib sheet', and 'pattern of care' form.

Newcastle College

About the college

Newcastle College is a large Further Education and Higher Education College, attracting students from across the North East of England. The college has expanded to include nine other satellite sites across Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside. Approximately 115 young adult carers were identified through last year's enrolment.

In June 2017, one of the college's learner mentors (now lead learning mentor) was nominated for a Carer Friendly Community Award at a Carers Week event, hosted by Newcastle City Council, Newcastle Carers and the Carers Trust. The award was in recognition of work with a learner, initially referred to the mentor for academic support. As the relationship developed, the learner disclosed that they were a carer and the mentor worked with the learner, and their family, to access support to enable the young person to progress in college. The event was an 'eye-opener' for the pastoral team and underlined where support was missing for young adult carers at Newcastle College.

Before their involvement in the Targeted Support for Colleges project, the college had already started to make changes to improve support for young adult carers, for example changing the enrolment form to allow new students to disclose their caring role. However, the project provided opportunity, and support, to focus on other areas where improvements were needed; in particular, the development and implementation of a young adult carers' policy. Overall, the team wanted young adult carers to be confident that support was there if they needed it.

"I think one of the simple things is just having it consistent in terms of the message that the college is supportive...so that every learner feels that they have that support and have a great experience, here, at college, regardless of what they're dealing with outside of college." Carers lead

The pastoral manager also hoped to share achievements and learning from the project to model improvement in support for young adult carers with other colleges in the Newcastle College Group.

Provision for young adult carers

Since the project began, the lead learning mentor has become the designated lead for young adult carers. The lead mentor within each of the college schools is the main point of contact and champion for young adult carers and staff in that area.

Together with the lead mentors, the carers lead has developed a policy on young adult carers that will slot into existing policy documents. The policy includes, for example, information about the type of caring responsibilities a young adult carer might have and how this could impact on their learning, the roles of the carers lead and other lead learning mentors, and a list of 'flags' for teaching staff to help them to identify if a student in their class might be a carer.

An e-learning module, developed by Newcastle City Council, on services provided by the local authority for young adult carers has been rolled out to learning mentors, progression coaches, student services and the safeguarding team. This will be followed by face-to-face training delivered by the carers lead, including, from September 2018, sessions with teaching staff as part of their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Early in the project, the team visited a young adult carers group at Newcastle Carers to talk about what they were doing, get feedback on what young adult carers would find useful and what barriers they felt they had in college (and at school), and explore what the young people might want from a young adult carers' card. From this feedback, the college has developed a young adult carers support plan.

When a young adult carer is identified and wants support, the lead mentor in their school works with the young person to develop a support plan. This captures information about, for example, the learner's caring role, day-to-day routines and challenges faced in college, how long they have been caring for someone and their links with carers services. This helps the pastoral team to tailor support to the needs of the individual young adult carer and reduce the chances of a crisis situation occurring. At this point, the learner is also able to access a young carers card.

Information for existing and prospective students on the support provided for young adult carers has been added to the college's website, and a number of new awareness-raising activities are planned for the coming year. For example, lead mentors will attend freshers' fair events, alongside local carers services, during next year's induction week to promote their services. Over the course of the project, the college has developed stronger relationships with Newcastle Carers and established a new partnership with the young adult carers services in Gateshead.

At advice and guidance and open evenings, prior to the start of the new academic year, the college records details of the students attending, including, if they wish to disclose, that they are a young adult carer. Before they start in September, these young people will be invited to a Keep Warm Event, tailored to young adult carers. This will provide an opportunity for young people to come into college, find out where services are located, meet the pastoral team and talk about the support provided, supporting their transition into Further Education.

Challenges

The commitment of the pastoral team, from the manager through to the network of champion learning mentors, has meant that changes to improve support for young adult carers have been made with relatively few problems.

Outcomes

Although services have always been available to young adult carers wanting support, particularly since the college introduced more systems to identify students in caring roles, the project has enabled the college to develop and offer more specific support which is tailored to the individual needs of young adult carers.

Delivering awareness-raising activities in different parts of the college, for example to the finance team, is encouraging staff who may previously have had limited knowledge about young adult carers, to consider what they offer and what else they could do, in their roles, to provide support.

Success factors

- Having a network of champion lead learning mentors, supporting by a central carer's lead, has enabled the college to embed changes across all of its schools.
- Visiting the local young adult carers group and consulting them on their needs and barriers in relation to college has enabled lead mentors to develop more tailored and bespoke support for young adult carers.
- Identifying young adult carers during open evenings means the college can provide support for them to make a successful transition into Further Education.

Solihull College

About the college

Solihull College and University Centre in the West Midlands, offers both Further Education and gold rated Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) higher education provision. The college has two main sites, one in the north and one in the south of Birmingham. Good bus and rail links from the south of the city to Birmingham mean that about 60% of students are not Solihull residents.

Identification of young adult carers was a key issue for the college. At the start of the project, Solihull had no means of identifying the numbers of young adult carers among the student population but based on national statistics, estimated that they may have around 290 young adult carers among their 3,500 sixteen to eighteen-year old students. Approximately twenty young adult carers were known to the student welfare service.

Within the past year, one of the student welfare officers has, informally, taken on lead responsibility for young adult carers and, through close working with Solihull Young Carers, begun to identify ways that the college could improve support. Consequently, the Targeted Support for Colleges project came at an opportune time and provided a vehicle to push actions forward with the management team. The welfare officer viewed the project as a double-edged opportunity;

“...the college would be keen to be part of something national ...raising the profile of the college, and it also has some really valuable work attached to it... and will give me a bit more power to my elbow.”

The lead had already begun to make links with other colleges prior to the project, for example talking to York College about their young carers card, and was keen to use the project to continue to link with other colleges and learn from effective practice elsewhere.

The long-term focus of the project was the early identification of young adult carers, so the college can work with each individual young person to identify how best to support them and develop a ‘care pathway’ through college. Shorter term targets included setting up a user group of young adult carers and getting promotional materials out to raise awareness across the college about the needs of young adult carers and the support available.

Provision for young adult carers

One of the big changes in support for young adult carers, which the carers lead had anticipated would take much longer to achieve, is access to the enhanced 16-19 bursary offer. Provided a student is registered with a carers organisation, such as Solihull Carers Trust, they can apply for additional financial support through the college’s enhanced bursary, of £1,200 over the academic year.

Early in the project, Solihull developed a specific young adult carers policy adapted from an example shared by another participating college.

Solihull has undertaken a range of activities to increase awareness of the needs of young adult carers and the support services available, with college staff. These include training

sessions, delivered jointly with Solihull Young Carers, to raise the awareness of support staff, for example, student support officers, the college nurse and counselling staff in addition to course tutors. Input on young adult carers from one of the college directors is also planned for the next whole college development day. For the future, the carers lead is keen to develop e-learning for new support staff and to work with a group of young adult carers to develop their skills, so they can also deliver awareness raising training to staff and governors.

Solihull is also about to launch a 'young carers card', developed with input from young adult carers. Information circulated about the card has already resulted in requests from staff wanting to know more about young adult carers and how the card works.

Solihull's schools' liaison officer now shares information in schools on what the college offers students with caring responsibilities, in relation to, for example, the enhanced 16-19 bursary offer for registered students and the young carers card.

The college is still working on formal processes to identify young adult carers. One option, currently under discussion, is to add a box, where students can disclose that they are a carer, to the student 'learning agreement' form, which every student completes. The current student finance form already includes a box asking if the young person is a carer. However, analysis shows that of 42 students now known to be young adult carers, only 20 had applied for finance and, of these, 15 had issues relating to attendance. As payments are made based on levels of attendance, many were not being paid. The carers lead is negotiating a reduction on the attendance level required (from 86% to 76%) for young adult carers in order to enable greater numbers to access financial support.

Despite the absence of a systematic induction process to identify young adult carers, staff training and awareness raising activities more generally have made a significant difference in terms of numbers of young adult carers known to the college. Student support officers for example, are beginning to ask different questions to young people on disciplinarys for attendance issues and young adult carers known to the service are bringing other young carers along for support.

Prior to the project, Solihull collected basic data on the numbers of young adult carers and compared retention and achievement data for young adult carers as a group, year on year. The carers lead has now broken down this year's figures by gender, age, ethnicity and primary disability cared for, alongside the financial analysis data. This more comprehensive data, backed up with national data, will be used to demonstrate to management and wider staff that numbers of young adult carers at the college are growing and that they typically face multiple challenges, often relating to their own health and wellbeing.

Challenges

As many students are from Birmingham, the carers lead has been working hard to build a closer working relationship with Spurgeons, the young adult carers service local to the city. Students referred to Spurgeons may have to wait two to three months for an assessment, and subsequent registration, which can delay their access to the college bursary. To overcome this, students 18+ can register with the YMCA in Sutton Coldfield. For 16-18 year

olds, an arrangement has been agreed with college management that Solihull Young carers will provide a temporary assessment. The carers lead has also shadowed assessments delivered by Solihull Young Carers with a view to performing the assessments in-house.

Time to develop improvements and to provide the individual support required, particularly as the carers lead works part-time is the main challenge. Involving students in feedback on work done so far, for example, has been valuable but time-consuming.

“My frustration is feeling as though we’re not servicing them well enough... we’ve identified them, we know who they are...it is a challenge of time and balancing that with my other role.” Carers lead

Future plans include training a small number of young adult carers as ambassadors for students with caring responsibilities in the college. The challenge of resourcing support, as more young people are identified, has been acknowledged by the college.

Outcomes

Financial support provided through the bursary, and the increased profile of young adult carers with staff across the college means that life in college should be becoming easier for young adult carers, *“without having to go into a lot of detail with members of staff they may not want to.”* Carer’s lead.

Additionally, involvement in the project has helped the carers lead to set up a group of young adult carers who are now actively interested and involved in improving support at Solihull College and are supportive of each other, as carers.

Success factors

- Having a designated lead, and support from the college directorate, has been key to improving support *“I think it’s got to be a whole college approach really. I think buy-in from the top, all the way down is really, really important.”* Welfare officer
- Partnership work with carers services, in particular Solihull Young Carers, has also been invaluable in developing support. It has also enabled the establishment of effective two-way referral processes.
- Collection of comprehensive data about young adult carers is enabling the college to implement discrete support and milestones that are specifically tailored to young adult carers’ needs, for example attendance targets linked to bursary payments.

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College

About the college

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College is a large college offering a wide range of provision, including vocational courses, apprenticeships, GCSEs, A-Levels, adult learning and Higher Education programmes, to over 6,000 full-time and part-time students. The college has six campuses; four in Bristol, one in Stroud and one in Berkeley Green. Their students are mainly local and come from the three local authorities covering Bristol and South Gloucestershire, but some travel from South Wales and Swindon.

Prior to their involvement in the project, the college had been undertaking some work to review and improve their support for young adult carers. The Deputy Head of Learner Services of the college's Bristol campuses had worked with the local Carers Support Network to review and update the college's policy on young adult carers. The college had good links with the Carers Support Network, who attended their freshers fair, sent the college awareness-raising materials and also ran some training with college staff. The college also included a tick box for young adult carers on their application forms for courses and for the 16-19 Bursary, and were starting to receive referrals from the Carers Support Network.

Despite having some good support in place for young adult carers, the college felt that, in places, this was quite disjointed and that they needed a consistent approach to identifying and supporting young adult carers across the college. They also felt that they could make more of their external links with local carers services and improve the awareness of young adult carers amongst staff working in different curriculum areas. Another key aim for the college was to improve their monitoring of their identified young adult carers, to inform where additional support may be needed.

Provision for young adult carers

The college found the QSCS framework very helpful in enabling them to make their support for young adult carers more explicit to both students and staff. For example, although the college had designated leads for carers, their names and contact details were not promoted anywhere, and students and staff were unclear about the support they offered. Through the project, these staff were able to add their details to the college website, the student magazine and posters which were put up around campus. They also developed promotional materials and presentations, used these on Young Carers Awareness Day and linked through to them on the college's Facebook page.

The college also met with local carers services to discuss and agree information sharing and referral processes for young adult carers. Although the college had previously received referrals from these services, these agreements formalised these processes across the three local authorities that most of their students come from.

To ensure that their support reflected young adult carers' needs, the college ran a 'Voice Of The Learner For Young Carers' session. These groups provide opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experiences and feed into the continuous improvement of the support offered by the college. The Learners Services team ran a session specifically for

young adult carers, to find out what support they would like the college to offer and how they would like to be involved in developing this. A clear message that arose from this session was the need for a peer support group, so the college has established this with the help of the local carers service. They ran one session with the carers service and subsequently the young people have met and shared their experiences of caring. The college's student union will continue to support this activity as a specific peer support group.

"...they've met together and they've shared email addresses. The student union will continue to follow that up and that's like a group then that sits within the Student Union as a support group." Deputy Head of Learner Services

As the college had recently run training on young adult carers for staff, they worked with the carers service to develop a training session for student union representatives, who can then carry out awareness-raising activities with their student groups. This training was due to take place in the spring term and will be followed up with tutorials for wider students if it is successful.

A key improvement that the college has seen as a result of the project is in their monitoring and tracking of young adult carers' progress. The Learners Services team has been working closely with the college's MIS team to run reports not just on young adult carers but also on other vulnerable groups. This has enabled them to identify some students whose attendance was falling and put additional support in place for them to stay at college. This is an ongoing piece of work to draw more information into the reports and allow for more detailed interrogation of attainment and progression data.

As a result of the Zoom session with York College, the Deputy Head of Learner Services spoke to the finance team and requested that young adult carers be identified as a priority group for the enhanced Bursary. They are now included as a vulnerable group in the college's finance policy and can access an additional £20 per month through the Bursary, which can be spent on a wider range of items, including toiletries, clothing and transport to take siblings to school.

Challenges

The link Vice Principal for learner services left part way through the project, which has created some challenges in securing buy-in from the college's governors as the team does not have a senior manager to take items to the Board. As a result, they have not gained the governor support that they were hoping to achieve through the project. However, they do have good support from the senior leadership team and hope to build on this once a new Vice Principal starts in the summer.

Making links with local authorities has proven challenging within the timeframes of the project. This is partly due to the college straddling a number of different local authorities and each having different processes in place. This is an area that the college is keen to work on and develop.

Outcomes

The young adult carers at the college have benefitted from the improved support that has been implemented through the project, particularly the peer support group. The 'Voice Of The Learner For Young Carers' session was very well received and has helped young adult carers feel that they are being listened to, as well as enabling the college to develop tailored support for this group.

"I think that they've had their voice heard and I think that peer support has been invaluable, and also they're working together to make sure that it's, kind of, a holistic approach." (Deputy Head of Learner Services)

For the college, the project has enabled them to establish a whole-organisation approach to supporting young adult carers and join up a lot of the support which was previously provided on a more 'ad hoc' basis. It has also helped them to promote their support for young adult carers to staff, students and externally, which should encourage other young people to choose South Gloucestershire and Stroud College over other providers.

Success factors

- Consulting with a group of young adult carers has enabled the college to identify and address a gap in their support that they were not previously aware of, and to empower young people to get involved in developing the support on offer at the college.
- Engaging in practice sharing sessions with other colleges has provided the Deputy Head of Learner Services with the practical information needed to get young adult carers included as a vulnerable group in the college's finance policy, providing them with access to the enhanced Bursary.
- The college's strong links with the local Carers Support Network has enabled them to implement many changes and ensure that these are tailored to young adult carers' needs.

Annex 1: Summary revised Quality Standard in Carers Support framework



CARERS FEDERATION QSCS

Quality Standard in Carer Support

Eight Achievement Points for Education Providers

Quality Standard in Carer Support

Supporting Carers in Education

What is the QSCS?

The Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support has been developed to recognise and further best practice in supporting students with caring responsibilities. The standard consists of eight achievement points which colleges should implement to create new and improved support systems for young adult carers.

What are the benefits of achieving the standard?

By achieving the standard, you will:

- Improve your support for young adult carers, thereby potentially increasing retention, attendance and achievement rates amongst students with caring responsibilities
- Demonstrate to external agencies and potential students that you value equality of opportunity and aim to meet the needs of all your learners
- Evidence that your organisation has an awareness of the challenges faced by young adult carers in education
- Demonstrate your commitment to increasing opportunity and improving the quality of learning for students with caring roles

QSCS – Eight Achievement Points

1. Carers policy and strategic commitment
2. Designated Member of Staff
3. Staff training
4. Outreach and raising aspiration
5. Student induction
6. Ongoing support
7. Partnerships and networking
8. Data collection and monitoring

Point 1 - Carers policy and strategic commitment

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organisation has an accessible written policy for carers, or ensures that carers are referenced in relevant existing policies, clearly stating their commitment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identifying carers - promoting a culture of understanding - implementing appropriate support throughout the learner journey. (Carers Federation can provide a sample policy to refer to) ▪ The college's senior management team is aware of the college's commitment to young adult carers and helps to embed support across the organisation. ▪ The college's Governing Board is aware of the college's commitment to young adult carers so there is accountability. ▪ The college promotes an ethos of acceptance and equality of opportunity, encouraging open dialogue about carers issues between staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organisation involves young adult carers in the development of a carers policy or in developing existing policies to include carers. ▪ The organisation ensures students can provide feedback about support services, procedures and the policy in general to support continuous improvement. ▪ Student carers are involved in regular reviews of the policy. ▪ A member of SMT is identified as a carers champion to ensure sustained commitment at a strategic level. ▪ Training is provided to governors on student carers' issues ▪ A link governor for carers is identified 	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed carers policy, or reviewed relevant policies, including the points highlighted ▪ Evidence that policy/ies have been promoted to students and staff, e.g. screenshots of webpages/intranet pages ▪ Agenda/minutes from SMT meetings which show that carers were discussed ▪ Agenda/minutes from governance meetings which include item on commitment to carers ▪ Documentation that demonstrates college's commitment to promoting an ethos of inclusion to staff <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes of meetings between staff and students in discussing and developing the policy ▪ Any relevant working documentation that supports the thought behind and the development of the policy ▪ Evidence of methods used to ensure students are actively involved in reviewing the policy ▪ Documentation that illustrates students feedback about services accessed ▪ Student/staff testimonials

Point 2 – Designated Member of Staff

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registration of Carers Lead (Registration form provided) ▪ Carers Lead attendance at final assessment ▪ Carers Lead able to discuss their role and remit during final assessment ▪ Carers Lead’s information and contact details promoted to students and staff, e.g. included on Intranet/notice boards ▪ Carers Lead undertakes activities aimed to raise awareness of carers and support on offer to staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carers Lead attends training to increase their understanding of the challenges a carer may face in education ▪ Carers Lead monitors the effectiveness of support systems and data concerning carers retention, attendance and attainment ▪ Carers Lead develops links and working relationships with external services to support referrals in and out of college ▪ The Carers Lead regularly updates staff to equip them in signposting students appropriately 	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed registration form ▪ Assessment Interview with Carers Lead ▪ Materials that demonstrate the steps taken to promote the role of the Carers Lead to students and staff ▪ Materials that demonstrate awareness raising activity undertaken by Carers Lead. <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence of participation in training ▪ Monitoring information collected by Carers Lead ▪ Minutes from meetings with external services ▪ Testimonials from staff / students ▪ Emails / letters to evidence actions and intentions ▪ Carers Lead Role Description

Point 3 – Staff Training

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ New and existing staff participate in training/awareness raising sessions to ensure a basic understanding of young adult carers and the challenges they may face in education▪ New staff are provided with access to the Carers Policy or relevant policies as part of their Induction (link to Point 6)▪ New staff informed about the support on offer to students with caring responsibilities▪ Staff are aware of who the Carers Lead is so they can refer to them for information and guidance when supporting students▪ Staff are aware of local support services▪ Staff are clear about referral processes to internal and external specialist services▪ Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Staff receive internal specialist training about carers, the challenges carers may face in education and the ways in which they can be supported▪ Staff receive training on ways to identify young adult carers in their organisation▪ Staff receive specialist external training to increase their awareness and build their skills in implementing support within the context of their organisation▪ Raise awareness amongst student union representations so they can develop social activities which do not unintentionally exclude student carers <p>(Training can be delivered by the Carers Federation)</p>	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Carers Policy (Point 6)▪ Staff induction material that refers to working practice with regards to carers <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The minutes of any meetings▪ Documents to validate the delivery of internal training▪ Documents to evidence any relevant training attended

Point 4 – Outreach and raising aspirations

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure information on support available to young adult carers is included in recruitment/promotional materials (e.g. prospectuses) and can easily be found on college website ▪ Ensure name and details of Carers Lead is included in recruitment materials and on college website, to act as main point of contact for prospective student carers ▪ Ensure any talks delivered at local schools/other learning providers mention support available to carers ▪ Ensure that information on support for carers is prominently displayed during open days/campus visits ▪ Ensure that any open day presentations about support on offer at the college mentions support for carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning and delivery of targeted open day(s) for young adult carers ▪ Planning and delivery of targeted taster sessions for young adult carers ▪ Tailored tours of campus for young adult carers ▪ Train some current student carers to act as tour guides for visiting groups/prospective students ▪ Run Q&A sessions between current student carers and prospective students ▪ Offer campus visits to young carer groups through carers services ▪ Deliver talks/workshops to young carers groups which mention support available to carers 	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment/promotional materials ▪ Relevant pages on college website ▪ Presentation slides/materials ▪ Open day materials/presentations <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details of and materials for targeted open days/taster sessions/campus tours ▪ Role descriptions for tour guides ▪ Presentations/materials form targeted talks and workshops ▪ Evidence that targeted open days/taster sessions/campus visits and tours have taken place.

Point 5 – Student Induction

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Methods for identifying carers are introduced at application and enrolment▪ New students with caring responsibilities are asked at enrolment about additional support needs▪ All new students are made aware of the Carers Lead and how they can be contacted.▪ New students are informed of the Carers Policy and how this can be accessed.▪ New students are aware of the support on offer to young adult carers throughout their course.▪ Information about support and policies is accessible via the intranet, induction handbook or provided as documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ As part of their induction new students attend presentations/talks about the role of a carer and potential support networks.▪ Peer support is established by linking new student carers with existing students who have caring responsibilities.▪ Community organisations that can support carers are encouraged to attend appropriate “Fresher’s” events.▪ The details of relevant external services/organisations are included in induction handbook.	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Induction documents▪ Examples of methods used to identify student carers at application and induction▪ Examples of the methods used to promote the Carers Lead▪ Carers Policy (point 6)▪ Documents / intranet print out to evidence how new students are informed of relevant support mechanisms <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Materials from presentations/talks▪ Testimonials from students▪ Any documentation to evidence the existence of peer support within the college▪ Details of organisations attending “Fresher’s” events▪ Minutes of meetings, documentation to demonstrate strategies with regards to raising the profile of carers within the college.

Point 6 – Ongoing support

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information about carers and related support services (internal and external) is displayed in accessible public areas and on intranetStaff are able to provide leaflets and contact information to students when appropriateStudents are provided with ongoing opportunities to declare a caring roleStudent carers are prioritised for financial support (e.g. through the 16-19 Bursary)Where possible and needed, student carers are offered flexible start and finish timesStudent carers are allowed to have their mobile phones on during lessonsStudents carers have individualised support plansStudent carers have individualised crisis plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Peer support groups and/or mentoring for young adult carers is establishedStudent carers are provided with opportunities to work from homeSystems are in place to help staff intervene early to prevent students reaching crisis pointRelevant staff are given guidance about how to respond to disclosure and support effectively during a crisis	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Examples of leaflets and information that is accessible to studentsEvidence that staff are provided with the necessary information to effectively signpost students to relevant servicesMethods for identifying carers throughout their courseInformation on carers accessing financial supportStudent testimonials re. flexible start/finish times, access to mobile phones, financial support etc. <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff testimonialsTemplates for support and crisis plansDetails of peer support group meetings and/or mentor role descriptionsStudent carers provided with necessary equipment to work from home

Point 7 – Partnerships and networking

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify carers services in all areas that students live in ▪ Ensure carers services know the name and contact details of Carers Lead ▪ Agree two-way referral processes with carers services ▪ Ensure local schools and other learning providers know the name and contact details of Carers Lead ▪ Collate details of carer contacts in relevant local authorities ▪ Ensure relevant local authorities know the name and contact details of Carers Lead ▪ Carers Lead makes regular contact with partners and updates information on external services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet with carers services on a termly basis to review monitoring information on carers ▪ Invite carers services to run drop in sessions and information stalls throughout the year ▪ Invite carers services to run training for staff ▪ Attendance at appropriate network meetings (such as the CAN at Carers Federation) ▪ Share good practice with other learning providers. ▪ Work with schools and other learning providers to establish progression routes and transition support into and out of your college. ▪ Work with local authorities to embed support on offer at your college in their carers strategies 	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact lists for carers services, local authorities, other learning providers ▪ Referral agreements with carers services ▪ Referral form ▪ Minutes/log of any liaison with relevant external services <p>Good Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes from meetings with external services ▪ Evidence of carers service activities within college ▪ Evidence of training run by carers services ▪ Evidence of networking with local authorities, other learning providers ▪ Local authority carers strategies

Point 8 – Data collection and monitoring

Requirements	Good Practice	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Monitor the number of student carers through enrolment paperwork▪ Monitor retention and achievement rates of student carers in different curriculum areas and across all types of provision (e.g. including apprenticeships)▪ Monitor the number of carers referred to external agencies▪ Break down data on carers by protected characteristics, to identify any groups which may be experiencing additional challenges or barriers to support▪ Involve student carers in the evaluation and review of support available to identify areas for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Carers Lead reports on carer-related data to different curriculum teams to help them improve support on offer▪ Carers Lead reports on carer-related data to senior management and Governing Board▪ Carers Lead draws on data to develop college-wide action plan to improve support for student carers▪ Monitor data on number of young adult carers in local areas so can identify any under-representation	<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Evidence that data collection and analysis is taking place <p>Good Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reports written by Carers Lead▪ Minutes of any strategic meetings where monitoring data, current support mechanisms and areas for development have been discussed▪ College-wide action plans

