

# Driving Change

Project and Evaluation Report

Year 3

October 2022

Published by National Learning and Work Institute

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Arnhem House, 31 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP

Company registration no. 2603322 | Charity registration no. 1002775

[www.learningandwork.org.uk](http://www.learningandwork.org.uk)

@LearnWorkUK

@LearnWorkCymru (Wales)

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without the written permission of the publishers, save in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency.

## About Learning and Work Institute

Learning and Work Institute is an independent policy, research and development organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches. Working with partners, we transform people's experiences of learning and employment. What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

**Stay informed. Be involved. Keep engaged. Sign up to become a Learning and Work Institute supporter: [learningandwork.org.uk/supporters](https://learningandwork.org.uk/supporters)**

# Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
1.Introduction .....	8
2.The Evaluation .....	12
3.Key findings.....	13
Views on support offered through the Driving Change project.....	14
Challenges to participating in the project and improving support.....	15
Colleges' progress against the QSCS framework.....	15
Outcomes for colleges and young adult carers.....	22
Project outcome indicators .....	23
4.Key learning from Year 3.....	25
Appendices .....	28
Appendix 1 Quality Standard in Carer Support Framework.....	28
Appendix 2: Driving Change Participation .....	34

## Executive Summary

Delivered between September 2019 and August 2022, the [Driving Change](#) in Further Education (FE) project aimed to improve the support that young adult carers receive in FE, to enable them to achieve better outcomes and fulfil their potential.

Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), Learning and Work Institute (L&W), in partnership with [Carers Federation](#), worked with FE colleges across the UK to review and improve the support they offer to young adult carers, using the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) Framework. The project originally aimed to work with 60 colleges, however this target was revised in years one and two to approximately 50-55 to reflect the additional resource involved in working with large, multiple site colleges and college groups (equating to 2-3 colleges), and the extended support required for some colleges whose Driving Change plans were disrupted by the impact of the pandemic.

As part of the delivery plan for the third and final year of Driving Change, L&W also developed a pilot in partnership with [Pathways](#), to explore the transferability, and test the implementation of the Driving Change model, in Higher Education (HE) with three Leicestershire universities.

### Project approach

During year three, L&W and Carers Federation worked with a further seven FE colleges and college groups, in addition to continuing to support three colleges that joined Driving Change at a later stage in year 2.

Each college involved in the project was allocated a key contact at Carers Federation who provided them with **intensive one-to-one support to review and improve their provision for young adult carers**. In addition to this, L&W continued to deliver a **programme of webinars** on different aspects of support for young adult carers. This provided opportunities for colleges to network, learn about support that other colleges were putting in place, discuss solutions to common challenges and to share good practice and resources.

A dedicated Driving Change **resource page**, on the L&W website, provides information and practical resources from the project to help participating colleges provide effective support for young adult carers to remain and succeed in education.

A **Steering Group** has continued to support and inform project activities, especially the recruitment of colleges, and the dissemination of key policy and practice messages.

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

Universities taking part in the HE pilot received tailored one-to-one support from Carers Federation, as set out above. L&W provided wider support including a scoping report for each university on findings from an initial consultation exercise to better understand the support they had in place for young adult carers; explore the challenges they faced and their goals for Driving Change. L&W also facilitated networking meetings throughout the pilot project providing opportunity for universities to explore common goals and challenges and share effective practice.

A separate evaluation of the Driving Change in HE pilot examined the outcomes of the pilot for participants and considers key learning for implementation of the Driving Change model in the HE context.<sup>1</sup>

## **Progress made through taking part in Driving Change**

### **Carers' policy and strategic commitment**

Through taking part in the project, colleges have demonstrated increased strategic commitment to improving support for young adult carers. Some colleges developed a new standalone policy for carers or enhanced existing policies. Others developed formal statements of commitment to young adult carers.

### **Designated member of staff**

Most colleges introduced a new carers lead role or roles throughout the college with responsibility for overseeing the delivery of support for young adult carers in the college or campus. One college also introduced designated student mentors for young adult carers.

### **Staff training**

All participating colleges introduced or enhanced staff training to raise awareness of young adult carers and the support on offer for carers at their college. This has increased staff confidence in identifying and signposting young adult carers to appropriate support. Colleges used a range of methods to ensure that training is engaging and accessible for staff, for example video, audio, online information packs, and quizzes.

### **Outreach and raising aspirations**

Colleges have developed new and engaging materials about young adult carers for prospective students, to increase the visibility of available support. This has included posters, banners, a video presentation and dedicated webpages to highlight the different types of support available at the college.

---

<sup>1</sup> Driving Change in HE: Project and Evaluation Report October 2022

### **Application, enrolment and induction**

Through the Driving Change project, colleges have enhanced their processes for identifying young adult carers, including for example, introducing or amending questions on the college's application and enrolment forms, as well as providing opportunities to declare caring responsibilities during college induction, ensuring that students can access the support they need from the start of their time in college.

### **Ongoing support**

Colleges have introduced new forms of support more tailored to the specific needs of young adult carers. This has included new opportunities to access regular, one-to-one support, the introduction of personalised support plans, enhancements to flexible adjustments for young adult carers and the introduction of a young adult carers card.

### **Partnerships and networking**

Through their participation in Driving Change, colleges have formed new partnerships with carers services, or strengthened existing relationships. Most colleges established two-way referral routes and some colleges had involved carers services in delivering staff training, as well as co-delivering events and activities for young adult carers. Colleges had also further developed partnerships with other organisations, including schools and local authorities.

### **Data collection and monitoring**

All participating colleges improved their data collection and monitoring processes for young adult carers. Prior to Driving Change, most colleges did not collect data specifically for carers, but are now able to report on measures including the attendance, retention, achievement, and progression rates of their young adult carers and use this to inform improvements to support:

### **Outcomes of the project**

Participation in Driving Change has resulted in a range of positive outcomes for young adult carers and colleges. These reinforce outcomes from year one and two of the project. These include:

- Better identification of young adult carers in the student population
- More developed and college wide commitment to improving support for young adult carers
- An enhanced support package, tailored to the needs of young adult carers
- Increased awareness of young adult carers in the college and improved staff and student confidence in their support offer for young adult carers
- New or improved relationships with local carers services to offer joined up support for young adult carers
- Improvements in young adult carers wellbeing and experience of college
- Improved networking and resource sharing with other participating colleges

All 10 FE colleges undertaking the final QSCS assessment during year three have been successful in achieving the QSCS accreditation.

## 1. Introduction

Delivered between September 2019 and August 2022, the [Driving Change](#) in Further Education (FE) project aimed to improve the support that young adult carers receive in FE, to enable them to achieve better outcomes and fulfil their potential.

Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), Learning and Work Institute (L&W) worked in partnership with [Carers Federation](#) to provide targeted and intensive one-to-one support to enable FE colleges to develop an effective and embedded, whole organisation approach to working with young adult carers. The project uses the Carers Federation Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS) framework (see Appendix 1). Developed in consultation with carers, the Standard contains eight criteria and good practice for organisations to work towards in improving their support for young adult carers:

- Carers Policy and Strategic Commitment
- Designated Member of Staff
- Staff Training
- Outreach and Raising Aspiration
- Student Induction
- Ongoing Support
- Partnerships and Networking
- Data Collection and Monitoring

At the start of Driving Change, the aim was to work with 60 colleges across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland over the three-years of the project. However, in agreement with the National Lottery, target numbers were revised in years one and two, to approximately 50-55. This reflected the additional resource involved in working with large, multiple site colleges and college groups (equating to 2 to 3 colleges), often as a result of college mergers. It also recognised the extended period of support required for some year one colleges to take forward their Driving Change plans, due to disruption caused by the pandemic.

Alongside delivery of the project, L&W has conducted an evaluation of Driving Change across the lifetime of the project. Evaluation findings and college case studies from years [one](#) and [two](#) of Driving Change are available on the [project page](#) on the L&W website.

We believe that young adult carers should have the same opportunities as all young people. Their journey through education should not be restricted by their caring responsibilities and stop at further education. Instead, they should be supported to understand their options and to progress into higher education, if this is a pathway



they want to follow. Therefore, as part of the delivery plan for the third and final year of Driving Change, L&W developed a pilot in partnership with [Pathways](#), to explore the transferability, and test the implementation of Driving Change, in Higher Education (HE).

This report provides an overview of the activities carried out during year three of Driving Change in FE, as well as key findings from the third year of the project evaluation. A separate report provides key findings and case studies from an evaluation of the HE pilot.<sup>2</sup>

## Project approach

Project delivery in year three was based on the model successfully tested through years one and two of Driving Change. Key learning about what worked well and areas for improvement identified in year two, was used to inform changes to delivery in year three. Key changes were focused on further support for colleges to prepare for and undertake the final QSCS assessment, and restructuring and actively promoting online project resources for colleges.

A project Steering Group has continued to support project activities, particularly the recruitment of colleges. The Steering Group comprises representatives from college associations, and organisations working with young adult carers including carers services, Carers Trust, Barnardo's, Carers Federation and former participating colleges. Two young adult carers also sit on the group, one of whom has been actively involved in project and evaluation activities over the lifetime of the project.

## Recruitment of colleges

Recruitment in year three focussed on countries/regions under-represented in earlier years of Driving Change, specifically London, and the East of England. Recruitment activities included:

- Targeted emails to college principals in priority areas and an offer of a follow up call to discuss the project.
- A presentation on the benefits of the project at the Principals Network (East Region).
- Information in the L&W Chief Executive's newsletter and wider L&W networks.
- Promotion by members of the Driving Change steering group including Association of Colleges (AoC) Chief Executive newsletters.
- Information on the Driving Change project page on the L&W website
- L&W social media, linked to national events e.g. Carers Week, and celebrating year two colleges' achievement of the QSCS award and the benefits to colleges and their young adult carers.

---

<sup>2</sup> ibid

In total, seven colleges and college groups were recruited and completed the project through to final assessment. An additional college completed an initial assessment but was unable to continue with the project. This brings the total number of colleges and college groups who have participated in Driving Change, over the three years of the project, to 39. See Appendix 2 for a full list of participating colleges.

<b>Driving Change participation Year 3</b>	<b>Country/Region</b>
Central Bedfordshire College	England - East
College of West Anglia	England - East
Eastern Colleges Group	England - East
Lewisham College	England – London
Morley College	England – London
Newham College	England – London
Petroc College	England – South West

Carers Federation also continued to support three FE colleges that joined the project later in year 2, through to final assessment in the spring academic term of year three - Derby College, Bournemouth & Poole College and The Manchester College.

### **Support for colleges**

Each college participating in the Driving Change in FE project was allocated a key contact at Carers Federation who provided a package of support, tailored to the context and needs of the college. The support period lasted approximately 8 months and included:

- An online initial assessment meeting to review and discuss current provision for young adult carers at the college.
- Advice and support to develop an action plan to address identified areas for improvement across the eight criteria of the QSCS framework.
- Monthly catch-up meetings with colleges to monitor progress, discuss any challenges in implementing plans, share good practice, and help to keep them on track within the project timescales. A monthly support plan was also completed with colleges at each meeting.
- Ad hoc support by email/telephone/video call to offer advice and ideas on implementing the action plan and overcome any challenges encountered.
- An online pre-assessment preparation meeting to help colleges get ready for the QSCS final assessment.

- A final online QSCS assessment meeting to examine how the college's support had progressed and developed since joining the project, against the eight points of the QSCS framework.

In addition to ongoing support from Carers Federation, L&W continued to offer wider support to colleges, as part of the project. This included:

- Access to a private [project resource page](#) on the L&W website bringing together relevant resources from L&W, Carers Federation and partner organisations and links to other sources of information. The page also provides access to a bank of practical resources shared by colleges throughout the three years of the project, either through the webinars or as part of evidence for the final QSCS assessment process, for example policy documents and templates to help colleges provide effective support for young adult carers.
- A series of themed webinars, which provided opportunity for participating colleges to come together to find out how other colleges were approaching the project, to discuss solutions to common challenges and share effective practice and resources. Themes included identifying young adult carers, providing ongoing support and partnership working.

As in previous years, former Driving Change participants, identified as having strong support in place in relation to each theme, were invited to present at each of the webinars. A Q&A session after each presentation, and good practice shared by other colleges and L&W, provided participating colleges with concrete examples of how they could improve their own provision. A young adult carer, who sits on the Driving Change Steering Group, provided an input to the webinar on ongoing support, to share their experience of caring alongside studying at college and the difference that support from the college had made to them. Recordings of the webinars and participant presentations were shared after each webinar and were made available on the project resource page.

A final webinar on preparing for the final QSCS assessment was delivered by Carers Federation, to provide colleges with a detailed understanding of the QSCS assessment process and the evidence required.

As part of their involvement in the Driving Change project colleges are required to:

- Secure commitment from a member of their senior management team to be responsible for taking the project forward. Each college is also required to identify a member of staff 'on the ground', to be the main day-to-day contact for the project – usually a member of staff designated as, or who would become, the carers lead.
- Participate in a light touch evaluation, conducted by L&W. This runs alongside the project and includes taking part in qualitative interviews at the start and end of the support.

- Colleges are also encouraged to involve local carers services and young adult carers at their college, in reviewing and shaping improvements, to ensure that support put in place through the project is tailored to the specific needs and experiences of young adult carers at each college.

### **Recruitment of universities**

L&W directly recruited three Leicestershire universities to take part in the Driving Change in HE pilot with Pathways - De Montfort University, Loughborough University and the University of Leicester.

### **Support for universities**

Each university taking part in the Driving Change in HE pilot received tailored one-to-one support from Carers Federation, as outlined above.

In addition, L&W provided wider support, including:

- An initial review of each university's Access and Participation Plan and consultation with key staff across the university to introduce the Driving Change model to them; understand their current context, including the support they had in place for young adult carers and other vulnerable groups; explore the challenges they faced and the outcomes they wanted to achieve. A short scoping report presenting findings from the review and consultation activities was produced for each university and shared with Carers Federation to inform the initial assessment meeting.
- Facilitation of three networking meetings between participating universities and key local partners. This provided opportunity to explore common goals and challenges and share effective practice in developing support in key areas. Based on feedback from universities on areas of interest, L&W invited external speakers to join each of the network meetings. For example, a young adult carer spoke about their experiences of caring alongside studying, including their experience of making the transition to a degree course at one of the participating universities. Another meeting provided opportunity to hear about the support available for young adult carers from a local carers service and to explore ways to work in partnership with universities, to better support student carers.

## **2.The Evaluation**

### **Aims and methodology**

This report focuses on learning from the third year of implementation of the Driving Change in FE project.

The evaluation aims to:

- Assess the process undertaken in year three to support colleges to review, improve, and evaluate their support for young adult carers.
- Explore the outcomes and impact of the project for participating colleges and their young adult carers.

The evaluation has included a range of activities:

- **Initial interviews with colleges** – Interviews were carried out with key contacts at a sample of five participating colleges, at the start of their engagement with the project. The interviews explored the colleges' current provision and support for young adult carers, motivations for taking part in Driving Change, and what they aimed to achieve through the project.
- **Follow up interviews with colleges** – Follow up interviews were conducted with the five colleges interviewed at the start of the project and one additional college, towards the end of the project. One of the follow up interviews was co-led by a researcher and the young adult carer from the Driving Change Steering Group who has supported the project team across different aspects of the project. Follow up interviews explored the colleges' experiences of taking part in Driving Change, the changes in support that universities introduced for young adult carers through the project and the outcomes for the college and their students.
- **Review of QSCS final assessment reports** – A review of each college's QSCS final assessment report was undertaken to explore the progress made in improving support for young adult carers against the eight criteria of the QSCS framework.
- **Interviews with young adult carers** – Peer led interviews were undertaken with five young adult carers from three participating colleges. Two of these were colleges which joined Driving Change at a later stage in year 2 and completed their final assessment during year 3. The interviews were designed to gain an insight into young people's experiences and views on support for young adult carers at their college. These interviews were conducted by the same young adult carer who co-led some of the college interviews.

### 3. Key findings

This section of the report provides a summary of key findings from the evaluation of the third year of Driving Change in FE.

## Views on support offered through the Driving Change project

### Support from Carers Federation

In line with evaluation findings from years one and two, colleges participating in the evaluation of year three of Driving Change spoke positively about the support they had received from Carers Federation throughout the project, particularly in relation to the frequency of support, the online format, and flexibility around the catch-up meetings.

Most colleges met monthly with Carers Federation to go through the QSCS framework, and one college described these as 'good milestones' to help them stay on track with their Driving Change plans.

Colleges valued that support from Carers Federation was tailored to their specific context and needs. They also spoke positively about the support and reassurance provided when facing challenges in working towards their Driving Change goals:

*'[the Carers Federation representative has] been excellent, yes she's been really supportive, very flexible, very knowledgeable, and taken a very positive approach even with the difficulties that we've had'* (Year 3 college)

*'[The Carers Federation representative] was really good in terms of going through the action plan that we were putting together and going through each bullet point within it. So, I felt a real level of support with assurance when I was working with her...that support has been excellent'* (Year 3 college)

### Support from L&W

All colleges who participated in the evaluation attended most of the webinars offered by L&W as part of the Driving Change project. Echoing findings from earlier in the project, colleges said that the webinars were a useful way to share practice and learn from current and previous participants around how to approach different aspects of improving their provision for young adult carers.

*'...because some of them had speakers that had already achieved the award ... that was really useful as well because hearing their feedback and their experiences helped to understand where we were heading'* (Year 3 college)

*'I think seeing other colleges and how they approach providing or developing a service was interesting because you can see a whole different set up in terms of staffing and staff numbers and names of roles and so on.'* (Year 3 college)

Two colleges explained that, although the webinars were useful, learning from these could not always be directly applied to their specific circumstances, for example, because the college had a larger cohort of students, or were not as far along in their journey to improve support for young adult carers compared to some other colleges.

For this reason, one college said that the one-to-one support from Carers Federation complemented the webinars well, as it provided the tailored support they needed to relate and apply learning from the webinars to their specific cohort of students.

Colleges used the project resource page to varying degrees. Some had found it useful in implementing their Driving Change plans, particularly to inform development of carers' policies, staff training, and young adult carer support plans. One college also used the page to find links to external organisations who support carers.

### **Challenges to participating in the project and improving support**

The main challenge for staff leading on the project for their college, was finding the time to take forward their Driving Change plans. This was also raised, although to a lesser extent, by colleges in year two. Some participants had struggled to balance work to deliver the project with their existing role and responsibilities.

Another college highlighted difficulties in implementing aspects of their Driving Change plan due to the time constraints of other staff, for example, time for teaching staff to take part in awareness raising activities:

*'I think one of the biggest challenges is around our teaching cohorts, because they are under so much pressure to get their data in terms of attendance and retention. It's giving them the space and time to really recognise. So it's the training of them, it's getting them to have it on their radar' (Year 3 college)*

One college felt they had struggled to make the progress they would have liked, as they started the project later in the autumn term than some other participants. They recognised that an earlier start would have enabled them to develop a more comprehensive support package ready for the start of the next academic year in September.

One participant suggested that a different format of support, for example a more intensive one-off input, rather than ongoing support in short bursts might help to address some of the resource challenges identified. They also felt this would have helped them to better retain and organise information relating to the project.

*'Possibly a 1-day seminar on the whole lot would be useful, I would say, rather than dips. I think you can clear a day in your calendar and go, 'I'm not here. I'm going to go to the whole seminar,' but what you can't do is guarantee a clear day here in work. (Year 3 college)*

### **Colleges' progress against the QSCS framework**

Since the start of Driving Change, year three colleges have made significant progress across the eight different areas of the QSCS framework. Before taking part in the project, all participating colleges had some level of general support in place for



vulnerable students in general. However, through Driving Change, their support is now more tailored to the needs of young adult carers.

This section provides an overview of the progress colleges have made against the QSCS framework.

### **Carers' policy and strategic commitment**

Six of the participating colleges/college groups did not have a carers' policy in place before Driving Change. Through taking part in the project, colleges have demonstrated increased strategic commitment to improving support for young adult carers. For example, one college has developed a specific carers' policy as an appendix of their student support policy. The college group participating in the project, adapted an existing carers' policy in place at one college for use across all three colleges within the group. Other colleges developed formal statements of commitment to young adult carers.

Typically, policy documents or statements included a definition of a young adult carer, an overview of the support package and processes for staff and students at the college, contact details of key staff members such as the Carers Lead/s, and information on local external partners who provide support for young adult carers. Colleges interviewed felt that their new policies helped to formalise the support on offer and demonstrate their commitment to improving support for young adult carers.

Gaining senior management buy-in, for example, from principals and governors, had helped colleges to drive their plans for improvement forward and be successful in achieving their Driving Change goals. For example, one college described how, as a result of their involvement in Driving Change, their Principal has identified the need to review other college policies, for example guidance on bursaries, in relation to young adult carers. For most participating colleges, support for young adult carers is now included as a standing agenda item at key senior management team meetings, which contributes towards a college wide understanding and commitment to young adult carers.

### **Designated member of staff**

Most colleges introduced a new carers lead role through their work on the project. Some colleges, especially those with multiple campuses, introduced more than one carers lead. Typically, these staff are largely responsible for overseeing the delivery of support for young adult carers, and one college explained how this helped to improve the college experience for these students.

*'... having a dedicated member of staff, [so] that if you do need support, you know you can go to that person and not be sent around the houses. So just [those] little additional things that might make their experience with us a little less stressful and chaotic' (Year 3 college)*



Introducing an identified lead for young adult carers has helped colleges to drive their initiatives forward, particularly in relation to awareness raising among staff and students. For instance, at some colleges, the carers lead has been responsible for developing promotional materials and staff training on support for young adult carers. Staff at some colleges also described how having a named carers lead has helped to improve college links with relevant external organisations, such as carers services.

As well as identifying a new carers lead, one college also introduced designated student mentors for young adult carers, which they saw as a crucial element of their support package.

*'We've got a new team of student mentors who really were the drive for the support that we offer, because each of them are allocated to any of our [identified] young adult carers. So that individual key person for that young person at college is really key to the whole process essentially' (Year 3 college)*

### **Staff training**

In line with findings from earlier in the project, all participating colleges in year three have introduced or enhanced staff training on young adult carers as a result of Driving Change, and they have also worked to ensure that this training is engaging and accessible for staff, for example, through video, audio, online information packs, and quizzes. Through Driving Change, some colleges had also invited their local carers service to deliver training sessions in-person.

Staff training has generally focused on building awareness and understanding of young adult carers and the college support offer and processes for carers, so that staff can feel more confident when identifying and supporting young adult carers.

*'We have an internal training video for staff, there's information about identifying, what is a young carer? What do they do? What challenges do they face? How can we support them in education around reasonable adjustments? And highlighting who the carers leads are'* (Year 3 college)

One college identified that new staff training has particularly helped staff to recognise where flexible adjustments might be needed for students with caring responsibilities, for example, flexibility around timetables, or allowing them to have their phones in class. Another college, who said there were low levels of staff awareness of the challenges faced by young adult carers before the start of the project, said that this has been 'significantly enhanced' through taking part in Driving Change.

In addition, the college group tailored their staff training to suit the varying levels of knowledge around young adult carers at each college.

*'We've used the PowerPoint, and we've made it personal to each of our colleges ... In some cases, ... there were loads of questions, because their baseline knowledge is so much less than we would expect it to be ... The other 2 sixth forms were less knowledgeable about parental alcohol and drugs, being a young adult carer, for that ... I think we've increased their understanding somewhat'* (Year 3 College)

### **Outreach and raising aspirations**

Colleges have created various pieces of engaging information and promotional material about young adult carers for current and prospective students, to increase the visibility of available support. This has included posters, banners, and webpages to highlight different types of support, as well as stands and presentations at specific outreach events. Typically, across the range of materials produced by participating colleges, content included the contact details of the carers lead and signposting towards the carers policy and support services.

*'We now have posters that highlight the support available for just young adult carers ... they're displayed in prominent areas. It's very much along the lines of, 'Do you care for somebody?' Or, 'Do you have caring responsibilities? If so, find out about the support we offer,' ... So, it is targeted towards carers rather than the general welfare support for people'* (Year 3 college)

A couple of colleges stressed the importance of raising awareness among all students about the impact of caring, and one college had developed their outreach materials with this aim in mind. One of their new materials was an online, pre-recorded presentation that could be viewed by all current and prospective students, for instance, it could be used in tutorial sessions or trips to schools, and any student could view it individually via the internal Teams site. They also created written resources to raise awareness of young adult carers among students:

*'We got leaflets and a matching poster which has my contact details, just gives a definition of young carers ... Anybody could pick it up, not just a young carer, and see the difficulties and perhaps they might recognise a friend of theirs and they could pass it on'* (Year 3 college)

### **Student induction**

Through the Driving Change project, colleges have enhanced their processes for identifying young adult carers, including for example, introducing or amending questions on the college application and enrolment forms, as well as providing opportunities to declare caring responsibilities during college induction. One college explained how these developments had resulted in increased numbers of young adult carers identified.

*'[The project] got us to think about how we word things, so for example on the enrolment and application form, how we word the questions to ask people if they are carers ... because lots of people wouldn't necessarily respond to, "Are you a carer?" ... and one of the benefits ... since this year, we've identified ... more than double the number of young adult carers ... than we had done in the previous year'* (Year 3 college)

Early identification means that young adult carers can be supported as soon as possible in their college journey. One college described how, once they have identified a young adult carer through the application process, they now include a young adult carer 'badge' on their Student Record system. All identified young adult carers will then be offered a meeting to discuss and complete a support plan where they can identify any support needs, such as flexible adjustments.

A young adult carer from one of the colleges joining the project later in year two, explained the importance of early identification and support to their college journey:

*'I got the support that I needed straight away and that came along with having weekly meetings to check up on me and support because I needed to leave lessons to go and care and things like that. So, it's very good from my college'* (Young adult carer)

### **Ongoing support**

In line with previous findings, all colleges involved in year three of the project had some level of practical support in place for their learners prior to Driving Change. In most colleges, this support was fairly generic and not tailored to the specific needs of young adult carers. One college with more developed support in place at the start of the project, focused on updating and extending their support across all campuses.

Through the project, colleges have introduced new opportunities for young adult carers to access regular, one-to-one support from a specific member of staff, which provides opportunities for staff to build up relationships with individual students. One

young adult carer, from a college recruited in the second year of Driving Change, explains how this one-to-one support has helped them:

*'... just having someone there to speak to and them understand what I'm going through, instead of me just sending an absence form like, 'I can't be there today because of personal reasons.' It's more, they understand my situation, so I feel a lot less pressured and things like that'* (Young adult carer)

At most participating colleges, young adult carers now have the opportunity to complete a personalised support plan, once their caring responsibilities have been identified. One college spoke about how they share these plans with teaching staff:

*'... we individualise [the support plan], so what are their caring responsibilities? How can it impact on education? How can it impact on their wellbeing? And then what support can [we]offer? With their consent, that's actually shared with the course team, so that the course team understand that each young adult carer is different and has different responsibilities, different levels of support outside of college and so on, it gives a good overview'* (Year 3 college)

Colleges have also introduced or enhanced their flexible adjustments for young adult carers. This has included ensuring that young adult carers have access to adjusted timetables, extra time to complete assignments, time out from class to attend appointments or emergencies, and financial support, such as travel expenses and laptop loans.

One college also introduced a young adult carers card, which students could use if they were late to class due to their caring responsibilities. A young adult carer from another participating college explained how a similar intervention helped them:

*'... for me one of the most beneficial things is I've been given this little card which I can use if I'm late to lesson for a carer related reason. It just gives me that peace of mind that there's some understanding on the college's behalf'* (Young adult carer)

Peer support and extracurricular activities aimed specifically at young adult carers were recognised by colleges as important aspects of ongoing support. However, the focus for many colleges on improving identification, as a first priority, meant that improving support in these areas was often a longer-term goal. For example, in response to feedback from their young adult carers, one college was planning an informal drop-in event for students, at which they could access support from external organisations.

*'... what we're trying to do with that drop in, Cuppa for Carers, we offer a free drink, and we'll say, 'Come along.' And then we're going to get carers services involved as well so we can introduce young people, it gives them the*

*opportunity, if they are working with those carers services, they can meet their support worker while at college as well' (Year 3 college)*

### **Partnerships and networking**

Effective partnership working with local carers services is fundamental for both identifying young adult carers and ensuring access to wrap-around support whilst studying at college. Through their participation in Driving Change, colleges have formed new partnerships with carers services, or strengthened existing relationships. For example, an existing partnership between one college in the college group and their local carers service, was further developed to involve all three colleges within the group.

Most colleges said that through these partnerships they had established two-way referral routes for young adult carers. In some colleges, local carers services had delivered staff training, helping to raise awareness of the needs and experiences of students with caring responsibilities, within the college, as well as co-deliver events and activities for young adult carers.

Colleges had also developed partnerships with other organisations, including schools and local authorities. One college mentioned that in addition to improving their support package for young adult carers, this also provided networking opportunities, through which they could exchange good practice.

*'We joined a young adult carers champions network in Cambridgeshire, for all schools and colleges across the county, so it's a good opportunity for us to talk about the support that we offer, but also share good practice with others ... [the network] shares some really useful resources with us, and offers regular training sessions as well ... So, it's all enhancing the knowledge of the team and the support that we can offer young people (Year 3 college)*

### **Data collection and monitoring**

All participating colleges improved their data collection and monitoring processes for young adult carers. Prior to Driving Change, most colleges did not collect data specifically for carers, but are now able to report on measures including the attendance, retention, achievement, and progression rates of their young adult carers and use this to inform improvements to support:

*'...we can gather the information centrally through our management information systems and then do easier reports from there. That should make getting the data and managing it at the beginning of the year an awful lot easier ... At the end of the year coming, I'll do a report which captures disclosures, interventions, different types, the impact, then we'll look at the overall retention and success rates as well...' (Year 3 college)*

Some colleges highlighted that this data is now included in reports to the college senior management team and governors e.g. safeguarding reports. One college also

spoke about how they can now monitor the support that young adult carers are receiving through their new data monitoring system.

*'I think what's been really good is ... where we've [been] notified immediately when there has been an update on a system regarding a carer. So ... if there's been an interaction, for good or for bad, with a member of staff, we've been notified immediately of that, and then we can react much more efficiently to that'* (Year 3 college)

A small number of colleges already had arrangements in place to collect, monitor and report on data relating to their young adult carers, prior to their involvement in Driving Change. However, through the project, they identified a range of actions to improve their use of data, including producing more detailed reports and reviewing the data more regularly.

### **Outcomes for colleges and young adult carers**

As a result of taking part in the Driving Change project **all participating colleges now have better systems in place to identify young adult carers in their student population.** Together with more developed and college wide commitment to young adult carers, this has provided a strong foundation for a **comprehensive support package that is tailored towards this group of students** and supported by partnerships with local carers' services.

*'I think our support is more explicit and coordinated now than it was. And I think we're probably more confident about the support that we have in place because we've identified all the aspects. We've seen some gaps and we've plugged those gaps'* (Year 3 college)

*'[We now focus on] being proactive rather than reactive in what we do to make ... [young adult carers] feel comfortable, make them feel that they can trust us, make them feel that if there is something going wrong, we're not going to judge them as being incapable or inadequate and that it is a supportive process'* (Year 3 college)

Colleges reported **increased staff and student confidence in their support offer for young adult carers**, particularly due to improved staff training and increased knowledge around the challenges faced by young adult carers.

*'The [project] has provided a knowledge and skills and underpinning to frame the conversation [with] learners... the structure around the service I think has been created from nothing really. Lots of things have gone really well I would say. We've come a long long way.'* (Year 3 college)

*'I think the main benefits were that when a young adult carer joins us now, they're going to come to an institution where there's awareness of the challenge they face and an infrastructure of support in place to support them through that, which I think was the overarching goal of the project' (Year 3 college)*

Young adult carers who took part in the evaluation were asked about the difference that the support had made to them, and **all students spoke positively about the impact that this had made across their education, home or personal life.**

*'It's made it a lot easier to care for who I need to care for because I've not got the added pressure of worrying about missing lessons or my attendance and things like that' (Young adult carer)*

*'I struggle with anxiety so with having a lot on at the same time, it sometimes makes it a bit difficult for me but with the support that I've had, it's made my anxiety a lot less intense because I now know that I have that support there and I don't have to be alone with it and worry about it' (Young adult carer)*

*'I think the most significant difference for me is how it's helped me mentally ... to just know that people understand and support rather than just having to deal with something and being ignored or not having this extra thing in your life acknowledged' (Young adult carer)*

## **Project outcome indicators**

The following section provides a summary of performance against revised outcome indicators agreed with The National Lottery for Driving Change in year 3. Performance is based on analysis of findings from the six colleges taking part in follow-up interviews, towards the end of their involvement in the project.

### **Outcome 1: Increased number of young adult carers are recruited and identified by colleges**

- **Indicator 1: Number of colleges introducing strategic commitment to identifying and supporting young adult carers (Target: 50% implement strategic commitment).**

All colleges enhanced strategic commitment to young adult carers, for example, through developing a carers policy and/or gaining buy-in from the senior management team.

- **Indicator 2: Number of colleges that include tick boxes on college application, enrolment, and support forms (Target: 50% implement this change)**

After taking part in the project, all colleges now have tick boxes to identify young adult carers at various stages throughout induction and during their time at college.

- **Indicator 3: Number of college's that introduce wider measures to enable young people within their student population to disclose caring responsibilities (Target: 50% implement this change)**

All colleges have introduced and/or enhanced wider measures to support with ongoing identification, for example, through outreach and raising aspirations, partnerships with local carers services, and providing access to regular, one-to-one support.

- **Indicator 4: Number of colleges that provide qualitative feedback indicating increased identification of young adult carers (Target: 50%)**

Five of the six colleges reported an increase in numbers of young adult carers identified. The remaining college expected to see an increase during the next college application process, having introduced a tick box on their application form.

#### **Outcome 2: Drop-out and attendance rates among young adult carers studying at college are improved**

- **Indicator: Number of colleges that perceive improved retention and attendance amongst young adult carers (Target: 50% perceived improvement reported in qualitative feedback)**

Two colleges considered there to be an improvement in the retention and attendance of young adult carers at their college. At the start of the project, four of the colleges interviewed did not have systems in place to identify young adult carers and therefore could not monitor these outcomes. Systems to collect and monitor data on young adult carers were introduced as part of each colleges Driving Change plans, but at the time of interview it was too early to assess the impact of wider changes to support on the retention and attendance of students with caring responsibilities.

#### **Outcome 3: Young adult carers receive tailored and joined up support from colleges and carers services, resulting in reduced isolation, improved well-being, higher aspirations and greater optimism about their futures**

- **Indicator: Interviews with a sample of staff and young adult carers indicate improved support available (50% report perceived improvements in support)**



Interviews with staff at all six colleges evidenced improvements to support for young adult carers at their college. All young adult carers interviewed spoke positively about the support they had received during their time at college.

- **Indicator: Interviews with a sample of staff and young adult carers indicates improved sense of well-being (30% report perceived improved sense of well-being)**

Three of the six colleges perceived that the wellbeing of their young adult carers had already improved as a result of changes made to support, and that impacts on wellbeing would also become clearer over the longer term e.g. during the following academic year. The remaining three colleges were unclear at this stage about impacts for students but expected that support introduced would impact positively on the wellbeing of student carers. All young adult carers interviewed indicated that their wellbeing had been positively impacted by the support from their college.

- **Indicator: Interviews with a sample of staff and young adult carers indicates joined up support from colleges, carers services and other relevant agencies (Target: 50% report effective joined up support)**

All colleges reported new or strengthened relationships with local carer services as well as other local partners, e.g. schools and local authorities, helping to ensure access to 'wrap-around' support for young adult carers during their time at college. Interviews with young adult carers indicated that they felt they were receiving the support they needed directly from their college, at the time of interview.

## 4. Key learning from Year 3

This section sets out the key learning from Year 3 of the Driving Change project, including both the FE project and the HE pilot project.

### Successes

- All colleges achieved the QSCS accreditation, demonstrating the hard work commitment, and significant progress made by participants in improving their support for young adult carers.
- Performance against outcomes relating to increased strategic commitment of colleges to improving support for young adult carers; improved systems for identification and numbers of young adult carers identified; more joined up support with local carers services; and impacts on the wellbeing of young adult carers exceeded targets for year three of Driving Change. Data over the current academic year will provide a more complete picture of the impact of changes to

support introduced by colleges, on the retention and attendance of students with caring responsibilities.

- The Driving Change project has continued to provide colleges with access to regular, tailored on-line support. Colleges have valued this, with some saying that there was more support than they originally expected, particularly in comparison to their experience of accreditation frameworks/processes to improve support for other groups of students.
- The high level of engagement with the good practice webinars offered through the project has been maintained throughout Year 3, providing opportunities for the exchange of good practice and practical examples to support students with caring responsibilities.
- The continued involvement of a young adult carer in project activities, including the webinars, has been another success in Year 3, particularly in relation to supporting with the fieldwork for the project evaluation. The peer led interviews with young adult carers have helped to further enhance the quality and authenticity of the evaluation findings and continued to support the development opportunity of this young person.
- The short videos with colleges and their young adult carers, together with college blogs, were a new and creative way for the project to engage with project participants and communicate key messages from the project to a wider audience in a more accessible way.

## Challenges

- In general, colleges did not experience significant challenges in taking part in the project. However, in some colleges, staff leading on the implementation of Driving Change had experienced difficulties in finding the time to take their plans forward as quickly as they hoped to.
- Many colleges were focused on identification as an essential first step in improving their support for young adult carers, which meant that plans across some aspects of support were viewed as longer term goals, to be achieved beyond the project timeframe.

## Learning for project delivery

- As the Driving Change in FE project ended in August 2022, there will be no further delivery in FE. Evaluation of the HE pilot has provided key learning to inform changes to the project delivery model and the QSCS framework to secure effective transition of Driving Change from FE to HE and the best outcomes for

the higher education context. Key messages from the pilot are presented in the additional report on the HE pilot.<sup>3</sup>

- A relaunch of outputs across the lifetime of the project, including evaluation reports and summaries, college case studies and blogs, and videos with colleges and young adult carers will help to ensure sustained impact beyond the end of the project. As part of this, the 'private' project resource page will be made available and promoted to wider FE colleges.
- Key policy and practice messages from Driving Change, for FE and HE, will be disseminated to policy/sector stakeholders using a range of communications methods and via L&W, Steering Group and other partner networks.

---

<sup>3</sup> Driving Change in HE: pilot project and evaluation report October 2022

# Appendices

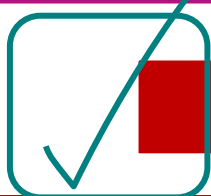
## Appendix 1: Quality Standard in Carer Support Framework

Delivered through the Driving Change project, with the support of The National Lottery Community Fund

Employment

Health Services

Schools



Further & Higher Education

# SCS

## Quality Standard Accreditation in Carer Support 'Working Towards' pack for FE and HE Providers



### What is the QSCS?

The 'Quality Standard in Carer Support' for Colleges and Universities has been developed to recognise and further best practice in supporting students with caring responsibilities.

Completion will enable providers to:

- Improve support for young adult carers, thereby potentially increasing retention, attendance and achievement rates
- Demonstrate to external agencies and potential students a commitment to tailoring support to meet the needs of all learners
- Evidence an awareness of the challenges faced by young adult carers in education

## QSCS Pack Contents

Process Chart

'Quality Standard in Carer Support' required criteria

Guidance Notes

Action Plan

Pre-assessment checklist

Carers Lead Role Description

Pattern of Care form

Sample Documents e.g. Carers Policy

Training Request Form

## Registration Period and Initial Assessment

- Initial expression of interest
- Registration details provided
- Initial telephone consultation
- Meeting to introduce the Standard and complete Initial Assessment
- Discussion around training needs and support options
- Support to develop the QSCS Action Plan

## Working Towards (Recommended completion time is 4- 6 months)

- Working Towards status awarded
- Action Plan commences
- Telephone/email support provided
- Invitation to QSCS workshops
- Any training organised and implemented
- Assessment date arranged
- Pre-assessment checklist completed

## Assessment

- Plan submitted
  - Assessment completed in person (2 to 3 hours)
- Report compiled and sent within 21 days of assessment
- Awarded or recommendations made for re-submission
- Re-submission made within 28 days
- Awards are valid for 3 years then re-assessment is required
- Awarded organisations can display the QSCS logo and can be listed on the Carers Federation website



# – Eight Achievement Points (FE& HE)

**1** Carers Policy & Strategic Commitment

**2** Designated Member of Staff

**3** Staff Training

**4** Outreach & Raising Aspirations

**5** Student Induction

**6** Ongoing Support

**7** Partnerships & Networking

**8** Data Collection & Monitoring

# Quality Standard Accreditation in Carer Support

## Working towards the QSCS

The standard and affiliating resources have been developed by carers and have been designed to be as 'user friendly' as possible. The resources should allow for flexibility so you can tailor the accreditation to your organisational structure. The process may also support with the reviewing and development of other policies and procedures.

The Carers Federation can draw on years of experience of supporting carers in the community and are therefore well placed to support the process. We are here to support and provide you with all the necessary tools you may need to successfully achieve the accreditation.

## The Difference between the Quality Standard in Carer Support and other accreditations and charters:

- The QSCS has been developed by carers for carers
- The QSCS has been developed through consultation and piloting over a 10 year period
- Carers Federation have years of experience of delivering a diverse range of services to support carers and work with health providers, schools, colleges, universities and employers to improve opportunities for carers
- We will provide bespoke support and training that meets the specific needs of your organisation
- Assessment is carried out in person by an experienced assessor
- Organisations can make their commitment visible by displaying the QSCS logo and certificates

*"We are proud to care for all students and particularly for those, who as Carers might just need that extra guidance, support, or a listening ear. Thanks again so much, we've enjoyed the journey, and this validates our efforts and importantly intent for our young people."*

*"We are delighted to be awarded the Quality Standard in Carer Support Accreditation, It will provide further impetus to keep moving forward and improving our services for Young Adult Carers"*

*"I am delighted to be involved in the Quality Standard because it doesn't just support the carers in our workforce; it has helped us to demonstrate our overall commitment to staff and promote flexible working."*

### Learning and Work Institute

Patron: HRH The Princess Royal | Chief Executive: Stephen Evans  
A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales  
Registration No. 2603322 Registered Charity No. 1002775  
Registered office: 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Arnhem House, 31 Waterloo Way, Leicester LE1 6LP

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**<sup>®</sup>  
We invest in people Silver







## Frequently asked questions:

### How long is the Quality Standard valid for?

Once you have achieved the Quality Standard in Carer Support your accreditation is valid for 3 years. To be re-accredited you can submit an updated QSCS Action Plan and we can re-assess for a small admin cost.

### What about training for our staff?

You may have your own in house training that you are able to deliver; we can offer advice regarding this. We can provide you with a range of training options including access to online training. We are happy to discuss your requirements during your initial assessment or throughout the process.

### How long does it take to complete the Action Plan?

We would recommend that you aim to complete your plan within a 4-6 month period. You may find you already have some of the criteria in place within your organisation. We will support in providing you with appropriate templates, resources and relevant information. We can discuss timescales with you if you require greater flexibility.

### What support is offered throughout the process?

Initially our team will visit you to discuss the QSCS in more detail, answer any questions you may have and support you to develop your Action Plan. They will also visit the college to undertake the Final Assessment. During the accreditation process we will offer support via email, telephone and Skype. In addition there will be opportunities to access focused online workshops providing opportunities for networking and sharing best practice. If you contact us and we are not available someone will respond to your query within a 48 hour period.

### How will the assessment take place?

Once you have completed your pre-assessment checklist and are confident that your plan is complete you are ready to arrange your assessment visit with the QSCS team, assessment usually takes about 2 to 3 hours. We advise that you collate all evidence in a file ready to present to the assessor at the agreed time. Following the assessment our team will complete a 'Provider Assessment Report'; this will outline how you have met the criteria and where not, will highlight any further evidence required.

## How long will it take to receive our Assessment Report?

We will send you your report within 21 days of your assessment.

## What if we don't achieve the accreditation?

There is support at the pre-assessment stage to minimise the likelihood of this happening. However if you are unsuccessful the team will feed back what further action needs to be taken to ensure you can be re-assessed and can achieve the standard. You can re-submit your plan and any additional evidence required via email within 28 days and receiving your assessment report outcome.

## Appendix 2: Driving Change Participation

Year 1	Country/region
Runshaw College	England - NW
Bradford College	England - Y&H
Wakefield College	England - Y&H
Leicester College	England - EM
Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College	England - WM
Solihull Sixth Form College	England - WM
Sunderland College	England - NE
South Devon College	England - SW
Coleg Penybont/Bridgend College	Wales
Coleg Cambria	Wales
Coleg Sir Benfro /Pembrokeshire College	Wales
Grŵp Colegau/NPTC Group of Colleges	Wales
St David's Catholic College	Wales
Coleg Caerdydd a'r Fro/Cardiff & Vale College	Wales
Coleg Y Cymoedd	Wales
Gower College Swansea	Wales
Coleg Gwent	Wales

<b>Year 2 – joined at start of project year</b>	
North West Regional College	N.Ireland
Southern Regional College	N.Ireland
Northern Regional College	N.Ireland
South Eastern Regional College	N.Ireland
South West Regional College	N.Ireland
West Lothian College	Scotland
West College Scotland	Scotland
Cambridge Regional College	England - E
City of Liverpool College	England - NW
Waltham Forest College	England - GL
Isle of Wight College	England - SE
Heart of Worcestershire College	England - WM
<b>Year 2 – joined later in project year</b>	
The Manchester College	England - NW
Bournemouth & Poole College	England - SW
Derby College Group	England - EM
<b>Year 3</b>	
Central Bedfordshire College	England - E
College of West Anglia	England - E
Eastern Colleges Group	England - E
Lewisham College	England – London
Morley College	England – London
Newham College	England – London
Petroc College	England - SW

<b>HE Pilot</b>	
Universities: De Montfort University Loughborough University University of Leicester	Leicestershire - EM