



High Level Impact Report update August 2018- August 2022

We know that our student communities are stronger if each and every student has what they need to succeed and thrive. However, it is commonly known that educational outcomes for care experienced school leavers are stark in comparison to their non-care experienced peers. Care experienced people comprise one of the most under-represented groups within higher education and are more likely to take longer and non-traditional routes into higher education

Navigating and participating in further and higher education can also be uniquely challenging for people with care experience and when navigating choppy waters, it can be hard-to-find safe harbour. As a result, our learners often ask for help multiple times before they get the support they need. The Hub for SUCCESS (HfS) a collaborative project was established in 2018 in response to this need and includes 3 colleges, 5 universities and 1 local authority partner.

What do we do?

Support - provide bespoke, needs led 1-1 support, helping people with care experience to get in stay in and return to education. We help with any need getting in the way of learning, such as financial information, housing issues, well-being and more.

Collaborate – We achieve more by working together to build relationships and provide personalised support.

Making a difference - We champion the expertise that comes with lived experience. We work in partnership with students with lived experience using the data we gather from our individual support to provide useful evidence-based work which contributes to systemic change.



The Commission on Widening Access notes:

“The Commission is conscious that the challenges faced by those with a care experience, both by their nature and magnitude, set this group of learners apart. Scotland must therefore be much bolder in its ambition for, and commitment to, those with care experience if we are to deliver fairness for this group of learners”. (A Blueprint for Fairness, 2016)

In **April 2014**, the Scottish Parliament passed the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act, part 9 of this Act placed a duty on Colleges and Universities as corporate parents to look after children and care leavers (hereon referred to as care experienced). In **2016** the Commission on Widening Access published its final

report: A Blueprint for Fairness and in **2017** the First Minister announced that there was to be an independent “Root and Branch Review” of the Care System in Scotland. On the 5th of February **2020**, a Promise was made to infants, children, young people adults and families in Scotland and this promise must be kept by 2030. The Promise Scotland is responsible for driving the change demanded by the findings of the Independent Care Review



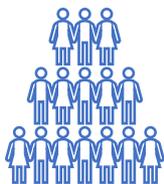
Our Priorities

The HUB for SUCCESS, while still in its early years, has seen considerable results. This report is intended to illustrate the **high-level** impact of our work



Work to ensure that support for care experienced people is appropriate available and accessible

Bespoke 1-1 Support



We have provided bespoke 1-1 support to **337** care experienced people helping them to get in, stay in or return to education.



Of these **337** people we have supported them with a total of **879** tasks related to getting in, staying in and returning to further and higher education. **The most common task continues to be in support of financial issues**



We have given individual bespoke support to 44 people with care experience helping them to **get into** university.

We have given individual bespoke advice, guidance, and support to **94** people with care experience to get into college to study at a further OR higher education level

Of the 138 people we supported to get into college and university **113** went to one of our partner Colleges or Universities



We were successful in getting **£47,000** pounds worth of financial support to students via external grant applications helping to mitigate the impact of poverty and to support staying in higher education.

Lead and develop
the HUB partnership
and activities

Lead and Develop the Hub partnership and activities

- Learner Explorers Primary School Programme

"We are acutely aware of the potential impact of early years and school attainment on access, and there is a role for universities and colleges to play in supporting

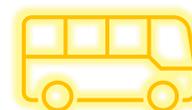
disadvantaged learners in the earlier stages of their learning" (Commission on Widening Access, A Blueprint for Fairness, p10.)

In response to the COWA recommendation above we sought external funding to lead, co-design and deliver a collaborative widening participation programme to Primary 7 aged children- the first of its type in Scotland.

We delivered **18** in class sessions to **295** children.



250 of these children joined us for a full day on campus visit to one of our partner college or universities.



The Learner Explorers Programme was co-designed, co-delivered and co-evaluated with student ambassadors who have lived experience of care. It is unique in that it introduced and explored further and higher education to a younger audience than traditional widening participation activities and introduced the language of care experience into classroom settings.

Evaluation of the programme evidenced an **increase** in children's knowledge of and aspiration to go to college and university post school.

The HUB for SUCCESS were successful in gaining a further **3 years** funding to develop this work - building bridges between widening access programmes and social care –sharing the learning of and impact of this work and helping to keep the Promise Scotland

Work to ensure that support for care - experienced people is appropriate available and accessible

Student Ambassador's

The HUB for SUCCESS were successful in gaining external funding to employ care experienced student ambassadors. We have **24** ambassadors, our colleagues, who support us in the delivery of our work and in ensuring voice and lived experience is central to what we change.

Student ambassadors reported an **increase in their knowledge, skills, confidence, and abilities** because of working with the HUB for SUCCESS.

“Claire, HUB for success Student Ambassador studying Social Work at the University of Edinburgh:

"I feel like I have been in summer school. I have learned so much, about The Promise and the relationship between education and social work, by working with the HUB for success over the last few months"



Voice, how does our individual work help us in influencing change and create impact?



The HUB for SUCCESS records the individual work we do in support our learners. We also record the outcomes of our individual work, the difference we have made by working together. We analyse this data to capture trends and key themes, this is our evidence base and our mandate for change. We seek out stakeholder and partner involvement and engagement to collaborate and agree solutions.

Voice, and the individual work therefore helps us to challenge the structural and systemic barriers getting in the way of our learner’s progress and to achieve policy change and wider impact.

We also know that key policy change can have a ripple effect and impact on a much wider group than those who have been individually supported by the HfS.



Challenge Educational Inequalities.

Care Experienced Student and non-payment of bursary for missing class.

The HUB successfully approached its college partner around issues with student funding and successfully negotiated a change to the “Attendance Policy” related to the Care-Experienced Student Bursary (CESB) – this was replaced with a relationship based, attendance management process rather than automatic non-payment of bursary for missing a class.



Outcome - 100% reduction in the requests for support from the HUB to challenge this issue. Students protected from falling further into poverty or accruing unnecessary debt. Policy change has a bigger impact by reaching a wider group of students who have not accessed/reached out to the HfS.

Interaction between payment schedule in SAAS and benefits

The HUB worked with Students Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) to highlight the negative impact of the interaction of the CESB payment schedule and its impact on universal credit and on student budgeting – we used examples to illustrate unintended consequences of this payment plan and suggested that by offering a payment “option” across a 12 month period this could help alleviate this issue.



Outcome – SAAS now offer an optional 12-month payment plan (only for CE students) which was implemented in academic year 2022 – already gathering positive feedback.

Discretionary Funding Process

Students seeking support to access discretionary funding, reporting concerns about the intrusive nature of and disproportionate amount of evidence required as part of this process. Students report that providing a personal statement is time consuming, distracts them from important study time and evidencing hardship felt re-traumatising and unnecessary. We worked with key partners and stakeholders and met with the Scottish Government to raise this issue and shared student voice and suggestions for change



Outcome - Scottish Funding Council and SAAS agreed to work with us. Both agreed to change the policy and guidance notes they write for fund management in colleges and universities. Changed tone and content to support more emphasis on supporting students and to be more balanced and proportionate in the providing evidence of hardship. HfS presented this work to the Scottish Government who proposed writing a set of principles to support a more proportionate approach. Both SAAS and SFC changed their respective policies for the start of the new academic term in 2022.

Student Funding and Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

In response to request for our support to navigate the interaction between student funding, the care experienced bursary and the benefits system the HfS regularly accessed legal advice from CPAG in support of its learners. The number of times we used this service were increasing (individuals cannot access this service only professionals) in recognition of this we approached CPAG to explore the issue in more detail and agree solutions.



Outcome – CPAG agreed to write and publish a new specific factsheet for our care experienced students and published it in April 2022. We shared this across our mailing list addressing reaching over **225 individuals and organisations** across Scotland. The outcome of this on the HfS was a decrease in requests for individual support from HfS to address with this issue and a resource available for care experience people and professionals to access.

Create connections
between the Hub
for SUCCESS, local
authority services and
third sector bodies

Supporting the workforce

Partners and Stakeholders have reached out for support to aid their learning and understanding of care experience, the care system and its impact on education and lifelong learning. Analysis of our individual work also helps us to steer and identify who we need to reach to support workforce development and less reliance on the HfS. This also allows us to support the connections between the worlds of education and social work.

We have provided learning events to over **600** professionals across the Social Work and Education Sector. We delivering talks at conferences, delivered workshops, co-delivered training and learning events with stakeholders such as Who Cares? Scotland and provided training to advisors working with care experienced people.

Education

Skills Development Scotland
Students Awards Agency Scotland
Primary and Secondary School Teacher
conferences
Mentors University of Edinburgh

Social work

Social Work Practice Teams
EVOC
Scottish Women's Aid
FE and HE workforce via SCAAP
Access to Industry

Establish and maintain a sustainable organisation

What's next?

This report highlights summary trend data and high-level outcomes of our work and is not intended to illustrate the full spectrum and or range of our work in setting up, developing, and delivering the HUB for SUCCESS.

We have not made as much progress as we would have liked in priority 4 - in leading and developing the HUB partnership and activities. In response to this we have been undertaking a re-design process in partnership with our student ambassadors with lived experience (supported by funding from the Promise Scotland) and the Office of Chief Design in the Scottish Government. We are at a critical phase of our learning and development and are seeking funding to implement and test re-design of the HUB service.



A journey through the HUB, what does it look like?



Decs Story

2018. One month into the establishment of the HfS the team attended a foster carers event with the City of Edinburgh Council, explained what our aims were to the foster carers and their social workers and distributed our contact details. We received a referral from foster carers to asking for support for their foster son who despite being in school was struggling to access advice and support to **get in** to further or higher education. Dec explained he had experienced significant trauma prior to moving into care and had missed large parts of his primary school education. Dec required and deserved more bespoke support than he was receiving from school.



We explored, mapped, and shared pathways for Dec based on his interests. We explained articulation routes, the guaranteed offer, and the financial support available. We were aspirational in our approach and provided emotional and practical support through a trauma informed lens. We helped him with the **getting in**

process: applications, personal statement guidance and the bursary application. Dec started Edinburgh college and came to the HUB sporadically; we helped him to **stay in** his course and provided bespoke when needed.



2019 Dec graduated from his college course.

Dec came back to us; he had a thirst for learning and wanted to more. We helped him to **return to** education by providing bespoke support to get into Queen Margaret University (QMU). We introduced him to the care experienced lead. Dec came to us sporadically during his studies for support and we helped him to **stay in** and access what he needed from QMU.



2022 Dec Graduated from QMU with his degree. Dec's foster carers wrote to us thanking us for our support and shared photos of their graduation celebrations. Dec's thirst for learning continued and he wanted more, he wanted to make up for all the educational opportunities he had missed in his early years. Dec came back and we supported him to **get into** a Post Graduate course and to apply for external funding to support his living costs. Dec has started his next journey and has come back to us for support to seek out a placement opportunity within our networks.



Dec and his Dad

