

AccessHE
Looked After Children Forum Meeting
held on
Tuesday 19 April 2016 (2:00pm-4:00pm)
at
Senate House, University of London

MEETING NOTES

Attendees:

Michael	Bennett	City University London
Lucia	Byrne	St Mary's University, Twickenham
Priya	Clarke	National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
Sarah-Louise	Collins	National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
Christine	Colson	University of Greenwich
Guy	Cowen-Hutton	AccessHE
Lauren	Hedges	AccessHE
Jade	Ibegbuna	London South Bank University
Janet	Lewis	Brent Council
Katherine	Mitchell	London School of Economics
Lesley	Mortimer	Brunel University London
Neil	Parsons	London Metropolitan University
Isabel	Patrick	London Metropolitan University
Tracey	Phillipson	AccessHE
Karen	Tucker	University of Sussex
Karen	Western	Brunel University London

1. Apologies for absence

Kay Bridger (Loughborough University), Chrissie Farley (Kingston University London), Jane Hargreaves (Kingston University London), Emily Hughes (Kingston University London), Rupa Lakhani (City University London), Liz Routhorn (London Metropolitan University), Rosie Tattersall (London School of Economics).

2. Welcome to the meeting and introductions from the chair

Lauren Hedges (AccessHE) (LH) welcomed the new chair, Lucia Byrne (St Mary's University, Twickenham). Lucia Byrne (LB) invited attendees to introduce themselves.

3. Notes of last meeting held on 14 January 2016

LH thanked those HEIs who had shared the information agreed upon at the last meeting in terms of the number of care leavers in their institution. This in turn helped to inform the number of delegates the 'life after university' event should be targeted at.

The notes of the last meeting were passed as accurate.

4. Consent to share agreement – Paper 1

The group examined the proposed cross-institutional consent to share document which the forum feels would be useful for HEIs when engaging with care experienced students.

In the discussion on Paper 1, attendees agreed upon the following amendments:

- The addition of more specific examples of who the third parties are with whom students' information may be shared
- For the agreement to broadly cover that students agree to be share all information unless otherwise stated in an exemptions box
- Explore if the form can be amended and used to cover both internal and external people with whom the information will be shared
- At the top of the form, the addition of a named contact for the student such as a social worker or corporate parent.

Action:

- ***AccessHE to amend the consent to share agreement as discussed and circulate.***

5. Life after university event – Paper 2

LH updated the group on the 'Life After University' event for care experienced students in higher education, which is currently planned for 16 November. The event will be hosted by London South Bank University.

Representatives from NNECL stated that their conference is being run on the same date. The forum agreed to investigate moving the date of the event to a week before to avoid a clash but stated that the target audiences are different.

LH informed the forum that the event has a target of 30 students but capacity may be increased to 40 if there is sufficient interest. Barclays have been approached to give a presentation on life skills, specifically finance, and LH is currently exploring the possibility of the Drive Forward Foundation (recruitment agency) presenting at the event.

The group discussed the proposed programme and the benefits for potential attendees so these can be marketed in advance of the event taking place. The following points were made:

- As students are exposed to a lot of careers fairs and the event is aimed at a relatively small number of students, a panel of employers would be more useful for both students and employers. This panel could discuss CVs, internships, internet presence, for example. Students could ask questions in advance, perhaps through Twitter, or on the day using a post box, anonymously if they wish. Inviting employers from a range of sectors would be important for good diversity amongst those presenting
- Mental health should be included as either a presentation or compulsory workshop. It was then agreed there would be two workshops which attendees would rotate between
- Information on access to accommodation should be covered in the presentation delivered by the local authority

- The notion of professionalism and behaviour in around the world of work should be covered in the presentation delivered by a recruitment agency
- Marketing should focus on the rights and entitlements of care leavers as this is felt to be an important issue and in turn can empower them
- The forum should consider signposting a suite of useful resources – online and hardcopy – to present the attendees with at the event. This toolkit could be a useful resource for care leavers as they progress from higher education into the world of work or postgraduate study
- The networking element should be included however it was felt that it could be presented in a semi-structured way. Building on this, colleagues felt there should be an ice-breaker element at the beginning of the event to help delegates get to know one another.

Representatives from NNECL stated that they would be happy to market the event through their network. Colleagues from Local Authorities are also happy to do this. NNECL also felt that the event could be a good item to showcase at their conference later in the year.

The group discussed the possibility of following up the event with a nationwide campaign with NNECL around the topic of 'life after university' for care leavers. This could include signposting to useful resources/organisations and reminders for care leavers with regards to setting up support and preparing for their next steps post-graduation. This will be discussed further between NNECL and AccessHE.

Actions:

- ***AccessHE to discuss moving the date of the event with LSBU, in order to avoid a clash with the NNECL conference***
- ***Lesley Mortimer (Brunel University London) to approach head of counselling regarding a mental health workshop***
- ***AccessHE to amend the draft programme as agreed and circulate this***
- ***AccessHE to invite and arrange presenters for event***
- ***AccessHE to draft a flyer for the event and present this at the next forum meeting***
- ***NNECL to consider event as a showcase item at their conference in Autumn 2016***
- ***AccessHE and NNECL to discuss a possible nationwide campaign.***

6. Discussion – IAG and resources

- a. Rights and entitlements of care leavers**
- b. Resources for practitioners**

The group discussed the means by which advice, guidance and information could be distributed to care leavers who may attend the 'Life After University' event. It was felt the following would be most practical and cost effective:

- Via a website – such as NNECL, providing a bank of resources
- A hardcopy list with links to useful websites, along with checklist/action points for the care leaver to complete
- By sending resources directly to care leavers' email addresses
- Via Twitter – tweeting out useful resources.

It was debated whether or not the production of a booklet containing information, advice and guidance is cost effective, necessary or in keeping with the way in which young people consume information currently. It was agreed that people access information through different mediums and providing things both hardcopy and online would help to promote awareness of the different sources of information.

Following recent feedback that the chair had received in meetings with local authority colleagues, the forum discussed resources for practitioners and whether hardcopies of information are required. Attendees felt that the Propel website now does much of the work which was previously done by individually produced HEI specific booklets and that hardcopy guides for practitioners are more difficult to update, whereas online resources are not, making online resources more practical.

Chris Colson (University of Greenwich) felt that a resource would be useful which outlined how to access support at HEIs whilst studying. This could cover the type of questions looked after children/care leavers may like to consider when looking at different HEIs and/or applying. Lauren Hedges' (AccessHE) presentation which she delivered at the NNECL conference in December 2015 could be used as a starting point to develop this.

Representatives from NNECL stated that they are hoping to produce a guide for local authorities, to complement their current guide for practitioners:
<file:///C:/Users/Lauren%20Hedges/Downloads/SupportingCareLeaversinHE1stNationalEdition16.12.2013.pdf>.

Actions:

- **Chris Colson (University of Greenwich) to pass on her 'A-Z referral information' sheet and AccessHE to then share with the forum**
- **AccessHE to work on a draft crib sheet of questions, exploring support available, for care experienced applicants considering HE.**

7. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the forum will be held on 21 July 2016 from 2-4pm.

8. Any other business

Representatives from NNECL presented their website <http://nnecl.org/> and gave a presentation about the network and its purpose. They encouraged those who wish to promote events aimed specifically at care experienced people to send in the details of their activities by filling out the online form - <http://nnecl.org/activities?send=1>. NNECL have lots of development work underway, including video case studies and webinars.

LH informed colleagues of the upcoming workshop around supporting estranged students being run for forum members in conjunction with the charity Stand Alone. The workshop will be held on 4 May from 10am-12pm.

LH informed colleagues of the upcoming Refugee Support Network training on 25 May from 9.30am-1pm available to forum members.

Those who are interested in attending either event should contact Guy Cowen-Hutton at guy.cowen-hutton@londonhigher.ac.uk.

Attendees from London Metropolitan University updated the group on their foster carers and finance event which has been in the planning. This event will run on 29 June.

Actions:

- ***AccessHE to circulate details of both training opportunities to forum members***
- ***London Metropolitan University to forward details of the foster carers' event to AccessHE.***

The meeting closed at **4.00pm**

AccessHE is a Division of London Higher