

Press release

Date: 2 December 2008

Title: University opportunities for care leavers

Welsh universities have been praised for supporting the learning of young people who have been in public care.

Jane Hutt, the Welsh Assembly Government's Education Minister, paid tribute to the work and commitment of Welsh universities and colleges at the jointly hosted HEFCW and The Frank Buttle Trust conference on *Supporting Looked After Children and Care Leavers in Higher Education* on the 12 November.

Six Welsh universities and one further education college have already been awarded The Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark for Care Leavers in Higher Education since 2006. The Quality Mark recognises universities' commitment to enabling looked after children and care leavers to succeed in their studies.

Jane Hutt, the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills said: "HEFCW should be congratulated for the real leadership it has shown in driving this agenda forward, with the result that - as measured by institutions that have the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark - Wales is the clear UK leader".

Gerri McAndrew, Chief Executive of The Frank Buttle Trust, said: "I'm delighted that Jane Hutt has endorsed the Quality Mark and that to date seven institutions in Wales have been awarded it. Throughout the rest of the UK there are forty

institutions with the Quality Mark with more expressing interest daily. We are aiming to double this number over the next two years.”

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: “The conference provided an opportunity for policy-makers and practitioners to share their experiences of supporting looked after children and care leavers into and during their time at higher education. We hope the good practice shared will result in more care leavers progressing onto successful careers in higher or further education.”

Ends

Notes:

The Frank Buttle Trust, which provides grants and support to enable young people to undertake courses at universities and other higher education institutions, has created a Quality Mark that recognises institutions, which go that extra mile to provide support to students who have been in public care

<http://www.buttletrust.org/>

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The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly Government Sponsored Body responsible for administering funds made available by the Welsh Assembly Government in support of:

- education in higher education institutions (HEIs);
- research undertaken by HEIs; and
- higher education courses at further education colleges.

HEFCW is also responsible for accrediting providers of initial teaching training for school teachers and commissioning research to improve the standards of teachers and teacher training.

In addition to its funding responsibilities, HEFCW provides advice to the Welsh Assembly Government on the funding needs, aspirations and concerns of the higher education sector in Wales.