

Press release

Date: 1 July 2009

Title: Welsh universities' commitment to young people in and leaving care

The number of Welsh universities demonstrating their commitment to supporting people with a care background to achieve their full potential has continued to increase.

Eight Welsh universities and one further education college have now achieved a Quality Mark which recognises universities' commitment to providing support and additional funding for people of all ages with a care background. The Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark for Care Leavers in Higher Education identifies institutions which have improved care leavers' academic skills to succeed in school, college and university.

University of Glamorgan and UWIC have joined Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, Glyndŵr, Swansea and Swansea Metropolitan Universities in achieving the Quality Mark. Coleg Sir Gâr is the first further education college in Wales to achieve this significant award.

Professor Philip Gummett, Chief Executive of HEFCW, said: "Welsh higher education institutions have made considerable progress in developing support for looked after children and care leavers since the Quality Mark was launched in Wales in 2006. Wales has a greater percentage of universities with the Quality Mark than the rest of the UK and I commend the sector for its very positive response and commitment to these learners."

Universities offer a range of provision for care leavers depending on their individual needs, including confidential advice, bursaries and personal support packages and all-year accommodation.

In June, the West and Mid Wales Reaching Wider Partnership hosted a successful regional conference showcasing the support available for care leavers in the area. The South West Wales Partnership is developing an all-Wales information and advice booklet for care leavers to be published in the autumn. The South East Wales (First Campus) Partnership has developed a 'Preparing for College' programme designed to provide advice and guidance for care leavers looking to continue their learning and the North Wales Partnership has developed a training programme for foster carers and care agencies to enable them to mentor the children in their care.

Ends

Notes:

Contacts for further information

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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

www.buttletrust.org/

HEFCW established the **Reaching Wider initiative** in 2002 to break down perceived barriers and widen access to learning. The Wales-wide initiative supports social inclusion and economic up-skilling.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) is an Assembly Government Sponsored Body which administers funds made available by the Welsh Assembly Government to support:

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

HEFCW also accredits providers of **initial teaching** training for school teachers and commissions research to improve the standards of teachers and teacher training.

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