SPA Call for evidence:
Using Admissions to bridge the gap for care leavers

The SPA guide is available at [www.spa.ac.uk/resources/care-leavers](http://www.spa.ac.uk/resources/care-leavers)

### Aberystwyth University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debra Croft</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager, Centre for Widening Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:dec@aber.ac.uk">dec@aber.ac.uk</a></td>
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### Case study information 1

**GAS** - an holistic wrap-around **G**uidance, **A**dvice and **S**upport for care leavers, looked after children and those estranged from parents.

As well as pre-admissions projects (from aged 10 and upwards) there is support to complete UCAS processes, visits to University, etc. As the 'Named Person' (under Buttle UK Quality Mark), Dr Croft liaises closely with Schools’ Liaison and Admissions to identify care-leavers through UCAS, on application / offer. Those indicating their status are contacted individually: e-mail introduction, follow up letter laying out the support available during the application year, at results time, and into registration. Including:

- support for departmental visits (travel costs refunded, or can be made available as public transport tickets),
- reminders for key dates: accepting places, applying for accommodation on line (365 days guarantee ), early IT/online library access for firm unconditional offers, etc.
- contextual confirmation acceptance based on declared care-leaver status, if applicable
- availability of early arrival (priority move in to accommodation), help to move, Starter Pack available in their room (bedding, linen, crockery, cutlery, stationery & food for a couple of days)
- the allocation of a peer mentor on arrival (an opt out system for these students - and other Widening Access groups) to our peer mentoring system ‘Signpost’
- close liaison from January to September with mainstream Student Support Mentoring Co-ordinator - particularly where DSA advice and support is needed (above average in this group)

The ‘Named Person’ role is key in being a pivot for accessing support through the mainstream support services; a signposting, referral system in effect. This is particularly effective as Dr Croft manages the flagship Aberystwyth Summer University programme meaning that she is available on campus over the school / college summer vacation period and can (together with a trained team) respond to last minute problems and queries.

**weblinks for additional information**

- [http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/widening-participation/support-students/care-leaver/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/widening-participation/support-students/care-leaver/) (English)
- [http://www.aber.ac.uk/cy/widening-participation/support-students/care-leaver/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/cy/widening-participation/support-students/care-leaver/) (Welsh)
Case study information 2

I am including this here as I think it should be included as best practice – the CLASS Cymru group of all HEIs and most of the FEI groups in Wales meet 3 or 4 times a year to discuss process, provision, transition, best practice, support needs, etc.

There are also representatives from the three Reaching Wider partnerships, Fostering Network, HEFCW, and occasional Welsh Government policy contributors.

The SW region Reaching Wider partnership produce an annual guide for careleavers in Wales (see link below)

The NW and Mid Reaching Wider partnership have a staff member who delivers training for staff within HEIs / FEIs, and to PGCE / Education UG students to look at the particular challenges and barriers to attainment for careleavers.

Key benefits:
Not re-inventing the wheel – positive collaboration across the whole nation – avoidance of clashing diary dates for meetings, conferences, etc. Facilitates, Wales wide stats collection for applicants, registrations, progression in HE

weblinks for additional information


Policy statement

Aberystwyth University has a commitment to the particular circumstances faced by care leavers from pre-application through to graduation, and includes a Bursary and other additional support

For care-leavers and those working with them there are dedicated contact points at Aberystwyth who can give help and advice...

- before arrival (at Open Days, Visiting Days, etc.), through the application process, to arrival, contact the Buttle UK named contact DEBRA CROFT
  - by e-mail dec@aber.ac.uk
  - by phone on 01970 622681, or
  - text to 07968 77 55 23,

on Open Days, Visiting Days etc. both Debra Croft and Doug Kerr (Student Support) will be pleased to meet you and show you around the various facilities that the University has to offer

Definition(s)

For Bursary entitlement – careleavers who are under 24 when they start (plus the statutory definition under the Children’s Act); includes those in kin-care, and at the discretion of a working group, those who are estranged.

For all other support, Starter Pack etc. – no age limits
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