

## Welcome from Rachel Calver, Post16 Assistant Head (FE & HE)

Wow, where did the summer go and already we are heading towards Christmas!

The Post16 team have been very busy during Term1 working with the Locality Teams and young people to support them into their Post 16 provision across the county and beyond. We hope you enjoy the articles in this first edition of the 'Post16 Update' and find them helpful and informative.



### KELSI - District Employability Offer

As we come to that time of year again when year 11 young people are beginning to make their choices around Post16 it can be a very confusing time for them and for those around them. VSK work closely with the Skills and Employability team ensuring that we have the most up-to-date information regarding options for young people on progression to higher levels of study or into employment, traineeships and apprenticeships.

### Foster Carer Training - Understanding the Post16 Sector

This training is delivered in partnership with the Skills and Employability Team of Kent County Council and includes College and University guest speakers. Its aim is to bring foster carers up-to-date with Post16 options for young people. Please contact your Fostering Admin Team to further information and to book a place.

### Kent welcomes its Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

As you will have probably all seen on the television, Kent has become a gateway for many people seeking refuge from other less fortunate parts of the world. Sadly many of these visitors are unaccompanied children and young people who have travelled far and overcome much hardship. The good news is that Kent has welcomed these children and young people, with the newly opened reception centres in Whitstable and Cranbrook, alongside the centre at Ashford receiving much support and donations from the local communities.



The young people are given help with their English, and a growing number of training providers are coming on board to rise to the challenge of helping KCC support these young people in the community as they progress to Further Education and Employment opportunities. The people of Kent are offering hope, real opportunity and the hand of friendship to the County's newest young people!

[Matthew Willock, Post16 Support Officer works with UASC living at the three reception centres](#)

## YEAR11 TRANSITION AND BEYOND

The government has increased the age to which all young people in England must continue in education or training, requiring them to continue until their 18th birthday. There are various options within further education and training for Post16 pupils, depending on their interest, aspirations, qualifications and experience.

For those pupils who decide not to stay on at sixth form Virtual School Kent have four Support Officers who cover each of the colleges in Kent and Medway, and also work with NEETS, training providers and support other opportunities such as apprenticeships and traineeships. The Post16 Support Officers also work closely with the locality teams to help identify the support needed for young people in relation to their progression into Post16.

The Post16 Team provides a link between the young person, foster carer, social worker, college and/or provider, supporting them in areas such as open days, applications, personal education plans (PEPs), and interviews. The Post16 Team also offers support in finding work experience and internships dedicated to young people in care within KCC.

Post 18 pupils who are participating in education or accredited training are also eligible for support from the Post16 Team. They have details of the local network of Universities, events running for young people, offers of extra support with finances and advice for those who want to apply for Higher Education.



Kate Corbishley covers Canterbury, Swale and Canterbury College



Wayne Aiken covers Ashford, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, West Kent & Ashford College and Hadlow College



Vicky Crompton covers Thanet, Dover, Folkestone and East Kent College



Lesley Lamb covers North Kent, Maidstone, Medway, North Kent College and Mid Kent College

## HONOURING OUR OUTSTANDING POST16 STUDENTS

We recently held our second Post16 Awards evening to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Kent Children in Care aged 16 years and over. The event took place at Gallagher Football Stadium in Maidstone and young people attended with their foster carers and friends to collect their awards and enjoy a fun filled 'Oscars' themed evening.

Nominations were received earlier this year from Social Workers, Teachers and Foster Carers with over twice as many in this age group compared to last year.

After walking up the red carpet, guests were welcomed with mocktails and music. Tony Doran, Headteacher of Virtual School Kent opened the evening congratulating the students and said he was 'blown away' by some of the comments on the nomination forms.



Guest speaker Rebecca O'Neill, from Brogdale gave a very inspiring speech about pursuing their dreams and this was followed by a few closing remarks by Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director - Social Care, Health and Wellbeing.

The entertainment for the evening included quizzes, a photography stand and the artist Dee Andrews drew sketches of the young people that they could take home along with their Oscar styled goodie bags!

The following awards were presented:

- 1 Gold Award
- 3 Silver Awards
- 42 Bronze Awards
- 6 'Star of 2015' awards for involvement with our Young Adults Council (YAC).

Nominations for next years event will be accepted from Easter 2016 - full details will be available on our website nearer the time.



## YAC UPDATE



### Young Adult Council

Our newly formed Young Adult Council (YAC) is for young people in Care and Care Leavers aged 16 to 21 years. They meet up every 6 weeks and the members give their views and opinions on the service they receive from KCC. The next meeting is on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December. If you have any young people interested in joining please contact: [Sophia Dunstan on 03000 414214](mailto:Sophia.Dunstan@kent.gov.uk) or email [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)

### Kent County Council Apprenticeship Graduation and Awards

Last month the VSK Participation Team went to County Hall in Maidstone to watch Bella Taylor and Amelia Kury collect their certificates for completing their NVQs. Callum Vinnicombe, one of VSK's Post16 Admin Assistants, also collected his certificate after completing his apprenticeship earlier in the year. We will soon be recruiting for some new Apprentice Participation Workers to join the team. If you know of any young people aged 18 or over that may be interested, please contact [Jo Carpenter on 03000 411876](mailto:Jo.Carpenter@kent.gov.uk) or email [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)

The VSK Participation Team did the double this year!! Not only did Amelia Kury win the KCC Apprentice of the Year Award, our Manager Jo Carpenter won the Apprentice Manager of the Year Award!

### Interview Panels

KCC has a duty to ensure that young people's opinions are heard when they recruit new members of staff such as Social Workers. The Participation Team has been involved in helping this happen and the 'Recruit Crew' has been created. The young people sit on the interview panels, have the chance to learn some new skills whilst being involved in shaping the services that they receive. We are hoping to grow the number of young people involved with the 'Recruit Crew' and will be running workshops for those involved to get them work ready too. If you have any young people interested in joining please contact: [Amelia Kury on 03000 412128](mailto:Amelia.Kury@kent.gov.uk) or email [VSK\\_Participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_Participation@kent.gov.uk)

## INFORMATION FOR NEW STAFF

If you are a new Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer or professional working with Children in Care and Care Leavers in Kent and you would like to find out more about what the Virtual School Kent Post16 Team do and how we can work together then please contact [Samantha Sharkey on 03000 418388](mailto:Samantha.Sharkey@kent.gov.uk) or email [Samantha.sharkey@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Samantha.sharkey@kent.gov.uk) to arrange an Induction Session.

And don't forget to visit our website where you will find lots of useful information:

<http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/>

## WHICH UNIVERSITY AND WHAT COURSE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Wayne has been visiting Universities this month and wanted to share his experience with you...

- Visit, visit, and visit: Go to the open days and ask plenty of questions; it may be hassle if your University is far from home, but the train ticket to visit is cheaper than dropping out after one term. Chat to some students for some honest first-hand experience of studying there.
- Pick something you love - You will find that you work harder if you're passionate about your degree.
- Learn your ABC: accommodation, buses, countryside; It's important to venture outside the campus, look at the costs of buses, off-campus accommodation and the shops. If you're an outgoing person look to see what the area has to offer, concerts, sports events or would you prefer somewhere a little quieter?
- Check out the support networks; everyone wants to have an amazing time at University, but when the going gets tough it's important to have a strong support network around you, find out what support services are on offer within the University.
- When in doubt make a spreadsheet; make a table of all the Universities you have in mind and compare each across a range of different requirements that are important to you, from computer facilities to tuition fees. The University you choose should be the right one for you, not the right one for others. Find out what careers your chosen subject can lead to and think hard about whether you can see yourself doing these options in the future?
- If you're confused about where your passion lies; you'll know if a course is right for you when you can talk for 10 minutes on the question 'so what do you like about that degree?'
- Consider the three Cs; City life, course modules and career prospects (you can substitute city life for country life).
- If you are going far away; pick a University that is easily accessible, it sounds obvious but a train journey involving several changes gets less and less appealing as the course goes on, not to mention the cost.
- Your student loan won't go as far as you think; your student loan should cover the bulk, if not all, of your accommodation costs; however it probably won't stretch to everyday essentials such as food, laundry, and toiletries. Nor will it stretch to 'luxuries' such as nights out, going to the cinema or eating out. In the summer preceding the start of your first term at university, it's advisable to get a summer job and start saving some money-you'll find your savings invaluable extra support when it comes to day-to-day living at university...PS, keep enough aside to purchase your NUS Extra discount card.
- Trust your instincts or gut feeling; If you find fault or have a nagging feeling or there are things you are not comfortable with when you visit a university then possibly that is not the one for you, if on the other hand you liked the sound of the course and you liked the feel of the university and the local area then this is the place for you.

Details of College and University Open Days can be found on our website along with Designated Contacts for Care Leavers at all of our Kent and Medway Universities. They are available to chat with you about your application, personal statement and also give general advice.

<http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/professionals/post16>

## CELCIS CONFERENCE

On Wednesday 7th October the Post16 Assistant Head and two of the VSK Participation Apprentices (Bella Taylor and Amelia Kury) made their way up to Scotland to deliver a workshop at the Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland (CELSIS) Conference for Children in Care and Care Leavers.



Despite the long journey and a fire alarm going off evacuating all the hotel guests the night before, we had a great time and received excellent feedback from our workshop which was around how we are promoting apprenticeships and work experience for Children in Care and Care Leavers. Being able to share the Assisted Apprenticeship Scheme and how our VSK Participation and Engagement Apprentices work was a fantastic opportunity to share our success.

Following the workshop, a request was made for us to visit Leeds to present to another group of young people - I think we may have to look at a commissioning charge, or a helicopter!



## Meet the Post16 Team

Malcolm Thomas, Deputy Head



From left to right...

Sam Sharkey  
Kate Corbishley  
Matthew Willock  
Vicky Crompton  
Calum Vinnicombe  
Lesley Lamb  
Wayne Aiken  
Rachel Calver