

# SUPPORTING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS AT LINCOLN COLLEGE



“The Designated Teacher assisted me to have a voice at college.”

Lincoln  
College



## Introduction:

Further Education (FE) colleges have a vital role to play in the successful transition to adulthood for students in care. One large-scale study of 1058 young people in care from the United States clearly demonstrated that the longer students were enrolled in college the more education and employment outcomes were achieved. Not only have FE colleges an important role to play in education and employment outcomes, they have a role in providing a 'safe haven' for students in care who during this time are experiencing many changes in their lives.

Looked After Children and Care Leavers at Lincoln College make good progress but there is always more that the College can do to support better short and long term outcomes for this potentially vulnerable group of young people.

Research also shows that Care Leavers regularly report the importance and influence that one member of staff at their college had not just for their education but also their success in later life. We as college staff can make a real difference to the lives of Care Leavers.

The purpose of this guide is to support you to maximise the opportunities you have to ensure better outcomes (for Looked After Children and Care Leavers).

Lincoln College is committed to improving outcomes for children in care and Care Leavers by providing them with a designated point of contact in Student Services who is also a Safeguarding Lead.

Lincoln College provides an invitation to all students who have disclosed that they are Looked After/Leaving Care to an early induction event so they can meet key members of the team in Student Services, and the academic area before the beginning of the academic year.

All students who are Looked After have access to a Curriculum Progression Coach within the academic area who they see weekly for group tutorials and have additional support through 1:1 tutorials with their Personal Progression Coach.

Student Services are able to provide support needs assessments, out of class 1:1 support sessions, exam arrangements, mental health support and counselling sessions.

Lincoln College is engaged in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process and completes termly PEP's for each student who holds Looked After status. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the statutory tool to ensure that everyone is actively prioritising the education of the Young Person, carefully tracking their progress and supporting them to achieve and to be aspirational.

All Looked After Children (LAC) have a statutory Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a legal part of the Care Plan; which is a statutory requirement for LAC from a child of 3 years if in education provision up to the age of 18.

The key personnel who should be involved in every PEP meeting are:

- The Young Person
- The Social Worker
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- The Carer
- Designated Teacher (DT).

The school Designated Teacher for LAC/the Early Years Centre lead for LAC/The college lead for LAC

Lincoln College also provides a progress report for the annual review for looked after students each year.

We also work closely with Children's Services of Local Authorities to ensure they have a point of contact at the College through the DT.

## Definition of a Care Leaver

Every year approximately 10,000, 16 to 18 year olds leave foster or residential care in England. A Care Leaver is defined as a young person who has been in the care of the local authority (LA) for more than thirteen weeks after their 14th birthday and for at least a day after their 16th birthday, and are therefore eligible for leaving care support.

Children in care must leave LA care by their 18th birthday. Local must support Care Leavers until they are 21 years old (or 25 if they are in education or training). On leaving care, some young people return home to their families but many start to live independent lives.

“It's not all learning,  
you can have fun too.”

“I am treated like an adult.”

“College has been my safe haven.”



## Current Support for Care Leavers at Lincoln College

Why we all need to prioritise outcomes and support for care leavers

- Only 6% of care leavers go to university
- In 2017, 40% of 19-20 year old care leavers were not in education, employment or training
- In the same year, over half of care leavers were living independently after leaving foster care aged 18

### Before a student arrives

At Lincoln College you will be advised via the application form that a student has disclosed that they are a Looked After Child . Please check each application form.

### During their studies

Once identified you will be invited to attend the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting for the student to discuss progress and attainment and requested to provide information for reviews and set action plans for progress if required.

### What to do if I think a student needs more support?

The Designated Teacher and Virtual School Co-ordinator can be contacted for advice and support around retention, re-engagement and referrals to additional services external to College. It may be that the College or the Virtual School has additional resources they can access before external referrals to services are required. If necessary they will contact the Social Worker and parent/carer for consent.

The Virtual School works with real schools and Colleges to ensure that all children and young people enjoy School/College, that they are fully engaged as learners, and that they are supported in tackling and overcoming the challenges that they face as they progress through the learning process.

## Making the most of tutorial time

- Hold high expectations for the young person
- Relationships matter to care leavers. Show that they matter
- Take the time to really get to know the student - you are one of the most important adults in their life at this time
- Looked After Children and Care leavers are all very different - take this into account in your relationships and tutorials
- A strong sense of identity is important for good outcomes
- Support the young person to interpret the good and bad events that happen in their lives and how to manage their responses
- Provide them with a sense of belonging

### As a tutor what can I do to support better outcomes?

- Encourage students to attend a Support Needs Assessment with Student Services where a one page profile and support plan can be developed for placements. This will include clear identified people as points of contact within the college.
- Encourage students to apply for examination arrangements if they identify a SEND need.
- Attend and engage in the EPEP and progress reviews with the Designated Teacher and Virtual School to develop effective communication, building a team around the student.
- Inform the Designated Teacher of student non-attendance and concerns around engagement in learning. The DT can support the tutor and student to address these and provide additional support sessions where it is identified as a need.

### Useful websites

<http://propel.org.uk/UK/>

Info about support for care leavers from UK colleges & Universities.

[www.nnecl.org](http://www.nnecl.org)

HE activities & resources for care leavers, Children in Care and those who support them.



“I never considered studying for a degree until I came to College.”

**Designated Teacher Contact**

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“There is help when  
you need it.”

“You can just be you.”

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