



North Highland College UHI

ACCESS AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

Introduction

The Scottish Funding Council undertook a review of the extended learning report system, which was part of the previous funding methodology. This review concluded that these funds should be used by colleges to support their inclusive practices and that each college region should develop an evidence-based access and inclusion strategy as part of their outcome agreement. For the Highlands and Islands, each college will develop their own Access and Inclusion Strategy and there will be an overarching statement within the Highlands and Islands Regional Outcome Agreement.

For over fifty years, the North Highland College has offered education and training opportunities for the communities of Caithness, Sutherland and Ross-shire areas. The North Highland College UHI is the most northerly college on the Scottish mainland and the area covers a population of 43,000 people and contains some areas of very high rurality.

Established in 1959 in response to the development of the fast reactor at Dounreay, the North Highland College UHI is now an academic partner of the University of the Highlands & Islands which was granted University Title in February 2011. The main North Highland College UHI campus is located in Thurso and includes a state-of-the-art Engineering, Technology and Energy Centre and ten miles out of town there is the purpose-built Rural Studies Centre. In addition, the North Highland College UHI also operates campuses in Dornoch and Alness as well as delivering courses to candidates all over Scotland who study on a flexi-basis.

The College has a prestigious research center - the Environmental Research Institute (Thurso) and hosts the UHI Centre for History (Dornoch). Both centers support the educational and economic development of the area, with research focused on energy and the environment, and the role of heritage tourism.

Partnership Working

We work in partnership with industry and commerce, the community and individuals, to offer education and training in a range of subjects to help people develop skills and experience of work. Work based learning is offered in conjunction with local employers and organisations. A selection of SVQ levels is offered to ensure that different levels of ability are catered for. The College also has strong links with a large number of employers in industry and it is through these connections that we can educate Modern Apprentices in Engineering, Game keeping, Hospitality, Professional Cookery, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

The North Highland College UHI works locally and regionally with employability partnerships including Skills Development Scotland, Highland Council, Department of Work and Pensions, Mental Health Team and the local Drug and Alcohol Team. The College Assistant Director for Learning and Teaching responsible for school liaison attends Highland Council meetings with key partner agencies from the voluntary sector, alongside Education and Children's Services. Further working partnership agreements have been developed and established with Skills Development Scotland and eleven secondary schools across the North Highlands.

Inclusive Approach

Contact with the schools and the various external agencies identifies prospective students who may be at risk of a negative destination. Group visits will be organized where the opportunity is given for them to experience the college for a day, meet staff and get information about courses in which they may be interested and the opportunity to participate in some activities, which may be relevant to a course in which they have expressed an interest. This opportunity is also available to all young people regardless of circumstances or background.

The College's standard application form allows potential applicants to disclose their disabilities when applying for their chosen course. The improved application form and the awareness raising sessions to staff should increase the success rate of this disclosure method.

If an applicant takes this opportunity, the Admissions Team will send an email to Learner Support and a designated member of the team will contact the applicant to arrange a face-to-face meeting, in order to break down any perceived barriers and arrangements can be made for appropriate ongoing support and guidance. This may be as a continuation and development of a relationship which has been established at an earlier point, e.g. a visit to Airport House, Transition Meeting. Disclosure could also be made during the interview with the lecturer or on the enrolment form. The Funding Team work within the Learner Support Section and as such disclosure made inadvertently through a funding application can be passed to other members of the Section who would act accordingly in offering support.

- 1) Information detailing the support arrangements on offer to students is clearly detailed on the College website and in the college prospectus and leaflets advertising the services provided by the Learner Support Section. There is also a section within these areas where information specific to looked after children is detailed.
- 2) The College's Admissions Team makes considered arrangements for all students applying for more than one course and attempts are made to arrange interviews for all courses on the same day. It is noted that this type of arrangement is particularly important for this group of students and offers and decisions are made a priority, due to the impact the decision has on other external factors such as accommodation, finances, careers, transport and so on. There will be continual communication between the support team, student, college staff and relevant external agencies to alleviate any concerns, general enquiries or progress updates in terms of application.

The college has a significant and robust system of ongoing support involving staff, agencies and professionals from across the college and beyond. The Learner Support Section offers a wide range of personal and pastoral support on a one to one and group basis. Students who take up the offer of support will be invited to an interview to discuss their support requirements and a Personal Learning Support Plan will be drawn up and appropriate support put in place. These support arrangements will be notified to the Programme Leader via the Accessibility Module on the Student Records System.

Access to student funding is an on-line process. Detailed instructions are provided to each student on how to access the system. The section staff are available to assist students on a one to one basis with the application if they are experiencing difficulty. We promote this through the Facebook Page and the team area on the website. Funding clinics are organised throughout the summer, here in the main campus in Thurso and at our other campuses further south. We have an appointments system which allows us to contact the student, identify their particular circumstances thus ensuring that they bring along the correct supporting documentation so that we can process their application.

Disclosures can be made at any time during the academic session either by self-referral or by tutor notification. The DSA Qualified Needs Assessor who is based in NHC guides HIM and Degree students through the DSA Application. The section operates an Open Door Policy for support and funding and our section area also acts as a "bolt hole" for students who are having a particularly difficult day. Students can come and speak to a member of staff at any time. Staff work in partnership with other college staff including those who support students within an academic context such as lecturers and Personal Academic Tutors.

Personal information is confidential and only shared on a need to know basis. The College has published policies and procedures for Data Protection; Acceptable ICT Use; Positive Behavior Management; Safeguarding Children, Young People, Vulnerable Adults and Staff. The programme at the annual staff conference affords the opportunity to disseminate current initiatives and update staff on college issues.

Supported Programmes

NHC has four supported programmes: Life and Work Skills SCQF Level 1/2

The Personal Empowerment Programme (PEP) - one in Thurso, plus two in the Invergordon area. These courses have dedicated support workers and all students have a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP). The PLSP is completed in conjunction with the student, this will identify the type of support required to meet the student needs. Personal and academic goals are set and these are tracked throughout the academic year. The student is involved in this process and also the progression routes and this is recorded on the PLSP.

CPD

The Learner Support Section have staff who are trained and qualified through The BRITE Initiative, an organisation which provided training and professional development allowing participants to create inclusive learning environments. Staff have also attended training that has covered areas such as Mental Health First Aid, Autism, Assistive Technology, Reasonable Adjustments, Positive Behavior, Safeguarding and a number of on line compliance training initiatives. In addition, staff are involved in budgeting and funding issues and attendance at conferences and meetings at local and national level. These events assist staff to remain up to date with new procedures and the contacts made there, provide opportunities for support and information networks.

ICT

There are study areas in the College where students can access computers. Read and Write Gold, which is Assistive Software, is networked throughout the College and is accessible to all students. The section has access to "My Study Bar, Dragon Dictate on one laptop for demonstration purposes, Livescribe and digital recorders and laptops.

The improvement of Wi-Fi has allowed students to use portable devices and the facility to access course materials from home. Students can also participate in video conferencing from home through jabber.

Student Portal

The student portal is being introduced across all academic partners. This gives students access to all their learning resources, Office365 applications, news feeds and tailored locally specific content.

Funds

The budget for ELS for 2015-2016 was £285,000

We have a total staffing of 9.5 FTEs. This includes 1.5 FTEs in the bursary team who form part of the Learner Support Team. This total is for staff across the three campuses.

Laptops, digital recorders and other pieces of equipment have been purchased to assist students in their studies.

Staffing budget totals £214.576. An additional 0% is to cover estate costs, depreciation etc.

2015-16	NHC	UHI Region	Sector
% of Full time students who completed successfully	73.1%	69.4%	65.5%
% of Part time students who completed successfully	74.3%	Not avail.	74.3%

- Outcomes for full time students show a fractional drop from 2014/15. However, at 73.1%, this figure remains as one of the highest in the sector and the highest of the incorporated colleges within UHI.
- Outcomes for part time students have improved over the last 3 years, with a further increase of 1.4% from the 14/15 figure. This PI demonstrates a gradually improving trend and is now in line with the sector average compared to our position of 6 percentage points below the sector in 2013/14.

% by Age Group of students completed successfully 2015-16 (on courses over 160 hours)	NHC	UHI Region	Sector
Under 18	68.4%	66.3%	62.9%
18-20 year olds	73.9%	71.4%	70.7%
21-24 year olds	74.0%	70.8%	69.9%
25-40 year olds	75.2%	75.5%	72.0%
41 and over	87.5%	79.6%	70.0%

% by Gender of students completed successfully 2015-16 (on courses over 160 hours)	NHC	UHI Region	Sector
Female	73.9%	67.3%	64.9%
Male	69.5%	73.9%	68.5%

% of students completed successfully 2015-16 (on courses over 160 hours)	NHC	UHI Region	Sector
10% most deprived datazone areas	57.6%	60.1	65.7%
20% most deprived datazone areas	57.8%	64.7	65.4%
Ethnic minority	47.1%	66.7	71.8%
Disability	68.2%	67.6	65.4%

Figures in **red** indicate NHC is below the sector average

Figures in **green** indicate NHC is above or on par with sector average

- Across the equalities data categories overall, the college is performing well in comparison to the sector and in most cases also the UHI regional averages.
- Further scrutiny of most deprived datazone and ethnic minority data is required.
- Within the sector and in line with government priorities, there is a need to improve outcomes for young people, particularly those under 18.

AIMS

1. Ensure reporting systems are able to provide the relevant information so that the impact of the strategy can be measured.
2. Improve on statistics within the deprived data zone areas
3. Promotion of Access and Inclusion Strategy to all College Staff
4. Input to the new build to ensure that this facility will provide accessibility to all students and staff
5. Review resources to implement this strategy in its entirety.

IMPACT

Case Study 1

Mary is a student who started a Course who has a history of mental illness, anxiety and self-harm. She had initially come into support office to use a bolthole as she had suffered from an anxiety attack whilst doing group work in one of her classes. With a non-judgemental approach to the difficulties that she was facing, the support team built up a trusting relationship with her. They worked closely with her tutors to ensure they knew any triggers for her anxiety. This worked well in the class and Mary continued to work on building her confidence whilst working with others in class. As with all mental health problems, recovery can be up and down. Mary sought further assistance from support when she was increasing her incidences of self-harm. Support team managed to seek advice from Mary's previous CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) psychologist and additional support was triggered for her within the Adult Mental Health services. The quick response and reassurance from the team has meant that Mary has managed to keep coming to college to complete her course and is aspiring to return to progress on her educational journey.

Case Study 2

James is a student who has attended one of the Access Courses. The student has been diagnosed with Autism and has poor communication and social interaction skills. However, he is a respected member of his peer group and by those who know him within the wider community of the college. The student has a good attendance record and gets involved in most activities both within and outside the classroom. At the beginning of the course he had a number of episodes which have been described as 'breakdowns' as he just became overwhelmed with the work or the environment in which he was working. The Student Support Team learnt to identify these triggers and have addressed them by offering one-to-one support in certain classes and activities. This strategy has seen a marked improvement in his behaviour and learning.

Case Study 3

A student from the travelling community was attending an introduction to vocational courses programme. **Jess** was having issues with reading and writing having only ever sporadically attended primary school. The support worker who was with the class liaised with the local adult literacy co-ordinator to arrange for Jess to have support. Jess's support worker arranged a time and place for her to meet with the adult literacy worker and then continued to help her develop while in class time. The partnership between adult literacy services and the college

allowed for monitoring of Jess's progression, a meeting area to work in college and specific context to be included in her literacy support sessions.

Case Study 4

Tim was invited along with other students who had social and/or communication difficulties (including ASD) to a transition visit. This visit consisted of a tour around the campus which was facilitated by learner support and current students with similar needs to those visiting. Some students who were invited had their parents wait for them at reception while the visit took place. This visit allowed Tim to see his classroom, social areas and meet fellow students before the college got busier and potentially more stressful. This also enabled any questions or concerns to be raised before Tim arrived in September. During the visit Tim expressed that he may have issues if the classroom became too hot for him as he finds it extremely difficult coping in a hot environment. We suggested adding an extra fan in the classroom, have Tim sit on the window side of the room and also ensure that he brings plenty of water. Tim also mentioned to a support team member that he does not shake hands with people and that strong smells can distract him. It was also noted having spoken with Tim's father that he tends to lose focus on topics/projects he feels are not done to his liking. Similar details of how best to support the other students were also noted down by support and added to their Personal Learning Support Plans. It was also noted that the students who helped with the tour enjoyed the responsibility and also answering the visitor's questions.

Case Study 5

Carole first enrolled at North Highland College to study on the NC Equestrian course. She disclosed her dyslexia at application and worked with student support on a regular basis to develop study skills and strategies to overcome the difficulties she faced due to being dyslexic. Carol was introduced to assistive technology, which supported her reading and writing and she completed this course and progressed onto studying HNC Equine Studies.

Carole applied for the Disabled Students' Allowance at this stage, which allowed her to purchase assistive technology software, namely Read & Write Gold and Dragon Dictate Naturally, to use when she was studying away from college. Carole continued to work with student support in order to refine her study skills and was able to study more independently using these skills along with the assistive software. Carole relocated to another town but continued to study through NHC using video conferencing for face-to-face meetings and Blackboard as a virtual classroom. She worked her way through the degree course, graduating with a BA Honours in Equine Business Management 7 years after first enrolling at the College. Carole was chosen as Student of the Year in her final year of studies in recognition of her hard work and tenacity in overcoming the challenges she faced with her learning difficulty.

	No. Enrolled				% of total				No. Successful			% Successful		
	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	13/14	14/15	15/16	13/14	14/15	15/16
Priority Group														
Disability	427	415	430	282	15.4%	18.9%	15.1%	15.2%	317	283	311	74.2%	68.2%	65.8%
Carer	19	47	51	46	0.7%	2.1%	1.8%	2.5%	15	38	34	78.9%	80.9%	66.6%
Price Group 5	45	52	48	46	1.6%	2.4%	1.7%	2.5%	24	41	36	53.3%	78.8%	75%
Care														
Experienced	NR	2	5	16	NR	0.1%	0.2%	0.9%	NR	1	3	NR	50%	60%
SIMD10	100	72	66						66	44	38	66%	61.1%	57.6%

Total No.
Enrolled 2768 2199 2846 1848

Appendix 1

North Highland College UHI: Access and Inclusion Strategy

PRE – ENTRY					
Stage	Present Provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Develop effective links with local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, schools, colleges and other partners in order to make available relevant information, advice and guidance (including financial support) about progression to and study options at FE/HE	North Highland College UHI has strong, well established links with a broad range of external agencies, e.g. Skills Development Scotland, Calman Trust, Highland Council, Barnardos, and DWP. The college also has a named school liaison contact who coordinates school/college provision. They attend transition meetings at high schools within our catchment area and liaise with school partners and the local council, e.g. at regional schools group in the North Highlands and Easter Ross area Funding Clinics and one-to-one assistance	College staff have good knowledge of care experienced individual background through current links, but there is a need to develop these links to highlight the college's commitment to all individuals who could be considered vulnerable. We aim to further improve services for all individuals through the implementation of a comprehensive Access and Inclusion Strategy This will involve reviewing and enhancing processes across the college Review staff hours of team members with responsibility for providing the support and guidance	Ensure all contacts are up to date and cover all appropriate agencies. Include all vulnerable individuals as a priority group in strategic and operational planning. Establish a team which includes vulnerable individuals and staff from key areas across the college with a clear purpose and remit to implement all areas of the Access and Inclusion Strategy Develop these relationships by identifying opportunities to attend local agencies and organisations to promote the college's commitment to this group Invite appropriate agencies to a college event to consider future networking opportunities and raise awareness of college facilities and services	Senior Management Team Learner Support Manager/Named Person Line Manger Marketing Team	December 2017 This is ongoing
Ensure outreach activities are accessible for those vulnerable groups such as taster days, open days, summer schools – funding clinics	Invitations for outreach activities are sent to support workers DWP Skills Development Scotland and other agencies who work with vulnerable groups The college organises targeted information events for this group. The college will work with appropriate agencies to ensure that costs are not a barrier to participation.	There is a need to coordinate all types of engagement with vulnerable groups to ensure a consistent and planned approach is adopted .Although successful some find there is still a barrier to coming to college for such events. The college would like to increase the number of these opportunities across all campuses and improve the marketing of these events	Develop an activity and marketing engagement plan e.g. use of social media, presentations to appropriate groups, more face to face opportunities to allow college staff to promote the support available campuses who will be available to this group.	Marketing Assistant Directors Support Team	30 th June 2017

PRE – ENTRY					
Stage	Present Provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Encourage access to FE/HE under-represented groups.	As part of annual curriculum planning processes, the college specifically identifies underrepresentation from specific groups and whether college programmes meets their specific and challenging needs. Consequently a number of new access programmes have been developed and additional support provided for these student groups. Annual quality monitoring processes ensure the programme remains fit for purpose. In addition, special consideration is given to entry requirements for some courses at the admissions points depending on learners' educational background. A support worker is assigned at this point to individuals who disclose a background where vulnerability may be an issue.	The college needs to better promote that we have a history of flexible admissions arrangements to meet the specific and challenging needs of learners.	Review marketing materials and mechanisms for engaging with vulnerable groups to ensure this message is well promoted	Marketing Department Admissions Department Learner Support Team	30 October 2017 More tailored publicity being produced/close liaison with Admissions team.
Provide impartial pre-entry guidance on FE/HE study	The school liaison contact or members of the student support team attend transition meetings relating to individual students. Information is personalised on an individual level. College staff also attend information days in high schools where a more general approach to advice is taken. Well established pre-entry guidance is also given to all prospective students at college information days.	There is a need to make more detailed reference to the support which is available at North Highland College UHI for vulnerable groups Ensure this is promoted widely across all schools and agencies within our catchment area, including those in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross.	Involve support workers in satellite campuses covering Sutherland and Easter Ross schools Create a mailing list for agencies to send out updates/any relevant information regarding the support of vulnerable group; include in prospectus; more face to face opportunities, use of social media, posters and flyers Review school-college information booklet to ensure information for care leavers is included.	Learner Support Team Marketing Department School Liaison Officer	Ref. Corporate Parenting Plan
Provide impartial pre-entry financial advice and information on support services available	At the above meetings financial advice and support services are also promoted. At present if student meets criteria required by Funding Council and it does not impact on benefits, additional funding may be available	As above	As above	As above	

PRE – ENTRY					
Stage	Present Provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Effectively publicise the support your institution offers to potential students who may be vulnerable and market to those colleagues in local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, DWP colleges, etc. who are supporting them in their educational progression	Details of support which is specific to be available on the website	The college needs to develop its strategy to publicise the support available at all stages of the student's college journey. See above.	As above	Marketing Department Learner Support Team	Ongoing

APPLICATION, ENTRY AND INDUCTION					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018) and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Identify a designated team of staff to act as a key points of contact for vulnerable groups	Members of the college learner support team are identified being the most experienced and competent in this area. As the college has 3 geographically dispersed campuses across the North Highlands, additional student support team members have been identified.	There is a need to disseminate the details of these college contacts more widely across all college campuses.	Email notification to be sent to all college staff Support for Learners Section on website	Learner Support Manager	30 th April 2017 Have completed this through more publicity re team
Have in place methods of identifying applicants from vulnerable backgrounds.	Care experienced individuals and vulnerable groups and students who will require support are identified through a question on the application and enrolment forms, both online and paper based. Reports detailing all students identified in this category are extracted from the student information system and passed to the Support for Learners Team who then contacts the student. Subsequently, a PLSP is created detailing their individual support needs. Permission is obtained from the student to share specific details with tutors and other appropriate parties such as the Bursary Officer. In addition, the Admissions Department notifies the named contact when any student discloses their care background or disability on the application form. This is followed up as above.	This system was newly introduced in 2014/15 academic year; hence there was a delay in initial contact being made. As the process becomes more systematically embedded in the application process, this will improve. Required timescales for contact will be built into college procedures.	Identify timescale for initial contact with student to be made following notification of disclosure within the college procedure for managing student support.	Learner Support Team	30 th June 2017
Ensure information on the full range of support offered to individuals who have been identified as requiring support is readily available and easily accessible (financial, welfare and accommodation, academic) e.g. via dedicated website pages.	Information about learner support, including that for care experienced individuals, is currently available through several dedicated website pages and a learner support information leaflet. Staff within the Learner Support Team are aware that additional support is available for vulnerable students and that special consideration should be given to their needs	The information pages are at an early stage of development and require to be more fully populated. Not all college marketing materials currently highlight our commitment to vulnerable leavers.	Review all college marketing materials and add specific information for vulnerable groups where required, e.g. prospectus, course leaflets, finance and student support leaflets and web pages. Develop specific promotional materials to highlight our commitment to vulnerable groups, e.g. dedicated posters, testimonials from existing students and case studies. Develop web pages and use of social media in the promotion of the above.	Marketing Department Learner Support Team	30 th June 2017 This has been reviewed – updated leaflets distributed. Still require case studies to be displayed. Case studies now displayed

APPLICATION, ENTRY AND INDUCTION					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018) and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Offer identified personal support before the course starts and identify arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment if required.	Once the need has been identified one to one support is provided and the PLSP used to identify individual student support requirements. This is reviewed with the student at key points throughout the year.	The timing and frequency of review meetings will need to be reviewed to better meet the specific and challenging needs of students from a care background.	Identify timing and frequency of the PLSP reviews and include within the college procedure for managing student support.	Learner Support Team	30 January 2017 Meetings set up with Programme Teams for 2017/2018
Where required, support students seeking accommodation (FE) or to secure 365-day accommodation over the full life of their course (HE).	There are well established systems currently in place to support students with accommodation enquiries. Student support staff often act as advocates with the student's dealings with external agencies such as the local authority housing office. In addition support staff will work with external support agencies to assist care leavers in securing accommodation. The same support is currently given to HE students.	Arrangements will need to be monitored to ensure needs are met in a timely manner. There is student accommodation at one of our campuses which will be available for students both within and out with the academic year,	Ensure interim arrangements for longer term accommodation are in place.	Learner Support Team	Ongoing
Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements e.g. compacts, interview guarantees.	The college makes every effort to ensure special arrangements are made to meet specific individual needs, where required, e.g. locating interviews closer to the student's home address.	There is a need to re-iterate the requirement to be flexible across all staff undertaking interviews. The college should also consider interview guarantees for all care leavers.	Incorporate this expectation within dedicated staff development for programme leaders. Assistant Directors to consider interview guarantees for all care leaver applications.	Assistant Directors	30 th June 2017 This is already happening

ON-GOING SUPPORT					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-18 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
A designated member of staff to act as a key point of contact and advisor throughout the duration of the student's course.	The named contact meets with each student and relationship is developed. In addition the student will have a programme leader (Personal Academic Tutor), as a main contact on their programme. This tutor will liaise with named contact regarding support needs and to monitor progress.	There is a need to raise awareness of the college procedure for managing student support for vulnerable people from a care background across all college campuses, particularly the responsibilities of key members of staff.	Provide staff development sessions for programme leaders regarding college processes for supporting vulnerable people.	Assistant Directors	30 th July 2017 Staff identified
Ensure that the individual's circumstances are reflected in the support offered and accommodated within processes related to application, bursary and other funding provision.	Using the needs assessment detailed within the PLSP, the college tailors the support we provide to any student with identified support needs, including specific arrangements for vulnerable individuals	Improve the awareness of how relevant college processes have been adapted to meet the specific needs of vulnerable individuals with all members of college staff.	Provide staff development sessions for key college staff regarding college processes for supporting vulnerable individuals	Learner Support Manager	30 th August 2017 This has been reviewed but has been happening for a number of years.
Within the consent of the learner, agree a protocol for the sharing of information with the learner and the responsible local authority / Health and Social Care Trust, including continuing contribution to the Pathway Plan.	With the consent of the learner, an informal process currently exists for sharing information with appropriate external agencies to best inform the development of appropriate support arrangements to meet individual learner needs at college.	It would be beneficial if a formal protocol, allowing schools and other agencies to pass on information to college staff, was devised. This would improve communication about specific and challenging needs of these young people, subsequently enhancing the support they receive.	Contact other academic partners in UHI to enquire what protocols they have in place with their local authority. Develop college protocol for communicating with external agencies in relation to care leavers.	Learner Support Manager	30 th August 2017

ON-GOING SUPPORT					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-18 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
	We work with local authorities and other partners to ensure continuous financial support for vulnerable students. This often entails working with more than one external agency. Discussions take place at an early stage to ensure both students and relevant external agencies are made aware of all types of financial support available.	Funding allocations are made to colleges on a block basis, with all applications having to be made from this resource, in accordance with funding council guidelines.	Consult with West Highland and Argyll College regarding proposals to introduce discretionary funding for vulnerable students and jointly develop policy and guidelines for eligibility subject to available funding. Develop policy and guidelines for eligibility for management of this fund.	Anna Swanson and Partner colleges Anna Swanson	30 th July 2017 For students on mainstream courses, difficulty obtaining evidence for additional support – exams Funding made available to WHC 30 th July 2017
Provide impartial progression guidance relating to further study (e.g. FE to HE), or progression routes into employment and where relevant to support transition to higher education or employment.	Guidance is given to all students by their programme leader (personal academic tutor) regarding progression to further study; with careers advice also being provided by the student support team and relevant careers agencies.	At present there are no special arrangements for vulnerable students. College processes for managing the student journey will be reviewed to identify and specific arrangements required for vulnerable students will be disseminated to staff	Review college guidance arrangements and add any specific requirements for vulnerable students Provide staff development sessions for key college staff regarding college processes for supporting vulnerable students.	Anna Swanson/Jackie Manderson	30 th June 2018 Access Course provision being reviewed
Provide staff training across the college in relation to Access and Inclusion	The named college contact has attended various external events relating to issues affecting vulnerable students.	Follow up training is required across all college campuses and key staff, particularly to include more detail on the revised arrangements that are currently being developed. Support staff from all three college campuses will continue to attend external staff development events to allow them to disseminate knowledge to other members of college staff and to continue to provide the best support to vulnerable individuals.	Session on Access and Inclusion to staff Arrange more staff development sessions for key college staff regarding college processes for supporting vulnerable students Train support staff in our satellite campuses to enable them to best support those vulnerable students. Appropriate support staff to attend sector development events regarding support of vulnerable adults.	Staff Development Officer Anna Swanson/Jackie Manderson Jackie Manderson	February 2018 Ongoing throughout year Ongoing through year

ON-GOING SUPPORT					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-18 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
			Continue to share good practice within colleges across the Highlands and Islands region at the relevant groups	Anna Swanson/ Jackie Manderson	
Area - Digital Technology	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Liaison with the IT Team on inclusive software	Read and write gold is embedded in the system at present. Mind Mapping Software	There is a need to raise awareness of digital diversity and embed more assistive technology in systems for all students and staff to use.	IT Team in conjunction with Support for Learners and Marketing Team	IT Team Learner Support Manager	30 th July 2017 Staff have been attending courses for assistive technology
	Learner Support Staff recommend APPs for students based on their particular needs.	Raise awareness of APPs to all students	Promote the merits of using APPs	Learner Support Team and Marketing	30 th August 2017
	Use of Fast SMS and Facebook Messenger	Encourage use of this facility	Session for students/staff on how to make best use of this technology	Learner Support Team	Ongoing
	Limited staff development on Assistive Technology	Staff Development for all staff required for Assistive Technologies	Liaise with Staff Development Officer	Staff development Officer/Anna Swanson	Ongoing
Buildings	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-2018 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
	Accessibility is sporadic Wheelchair users are limited as to where they can go in College	Facilities have to be accessible to all wheelchair users	IT Team in conjunction with Support for Learner and Marketing Team	IT Team/ Learner Support Manager	30 July 2017 Accessible classroom on ground floor
	Interior décor not suitable for some disabilities	Professional advice should be sought for new build.	Highlight to Principal and Project Team	Learner Support Team and Marketing	28 th February 2017 Informal discussion with principal when looking at the plans
	Design of classrooms	Classroom layout should be advised by professionals from disability sector.	Liaison with Principal and Project Team	Learner Support Team	28 th February 2018
Learning and Teaching	Current Provision	Areas for improvement/development	Actions (AY 2017-2018 and beyond)	Staff responsible for Actions	Date for Completion
	All staff not aware of inclusive practices	Raise staff awareness	Staff Development from External Agency	Learner Support Manager/Jackie Manderson	30 th June 2018

MONITORING THE COMMITMENT					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-18 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
Nominate a senior member of staff to ensure the implementation of the Commitment across the institution and specify how it will be monitored and evaluated.	The Director of Learning and Teaching, who has line management responsibility for the Support for Learners function, has been appointed to this role. Objective(s) relating to the implementation and monitoring of the Commitment will be included in all Section Plans The Plan will be presented to the college Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee as part of a standing item on Access and Inclusion	The monitoring process will be reported to the Teaching and Quality Committee.	Assess progress on operational plan objectives at review meetings with all Managers	Anne Bremner/Lindsay Henderson/Anna Swanson	30 th June 2017
Ensure application, enrolment and progression data for the various groups identified by the Scottish Funding council are captured.	All application, enrolment and progression data is captured on the college management information system, SITS. Reports have been developed across all partner colleges in UHI Enrolment, retention and attainment data is monitored during annual course monitoring processes and actions for improvement identified where appropriate. This includes equalities data. Student representatives are involved in this process.	There will be a need to check that an appropriate report is produced to meet annual reporting requirements	Review current report format to assess suitability for annual reporting requirements Review college course monitoring template to include all required data as well as equalities data	Registry Lindsay Henderson	30 th April 2017 Discussion underway
Collect and collate feedback from learners to engage them in evaluating the quality of their experience and assist in facilitating feedback to Assistant Directors	Evaluation of the student's college experience is captured during the PLSP review meeting with the learner and recorded in their plan; however, this does not currently capture specific data relating to all vulnerable groups. All learners also participate in college wide course quality monitoring processes. This includes an early experience survey. General course and equalities data is captured to assist in the analysis and evaluation,	The college will need to review and develop its current mechanisms to ensure that specific data for vulnerable experienced leavers can be more easily evaluated and that opportunities for involving this group in the process is optimized .	Review PLSP proforma Review structure of early experience survey questions Speak to Partners re Report to identify more detailed analysis	Jackie Manderson Marketing Department Anna Swanson	30 th January 2017 30 th June 2017 30 March 2017 Liaison with registry at Induction
Ensure relevant staff across the institution is aware of issues relating to the needs of students who may be vulnerable	Initial Staff Development sessions have already taken place to raise awareness of the special considerations relating to care	Follow up training is required across all college campuses and key staff, particularly to include more detail on the revised	Arrange more detailed staff development sessions for key college staff regarding college processes for supporting care experienced individuals and vulnerable	Jackie Manderson	31 st March 2017 Awareness rai

MONITORING THE COMMITMENT					
Area	Current provision	Areas for improvement / development	Actions (AY 2017-18 and beyond)	Staff responsible for actions	Date for Completion
	experienced individuals and vulnerable students in education with dissemination of appropriate information at regular Support for Learners Team Meetings	arrangements that are currently being developed. See also above section on on-going support	students where relevant, outside agencies As above in On-going support		
Contribute to sharing of best practice via colleagues in local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, FE and HE.	UHI have a formal Care Leavers Group which meets twice yearly to discuss and share concerns and best practices. This involves all named contacts from across all UHI partner colleges. Student support has an excellent relationship with similar colleagues in our academic partner colleges and informal knowledge sharing also occurs throughout the year as opportunities arise.	The college needs to be more involved in sharing this practice with external agencies and local authorities e.g. through attendance and contribution at suitable events where colleagues in local authorities and other agencies meet.	UHI to extend membership of the Care Leavers Group Attend local Health Improvement forum meetings Identify further opportunities for similar events locally and across the region.	Anna Swanson Anna Swanson	Throughout year Represented on Carers Group and local Health Improvement Forum 30 th June 2017