

Case Study: Working with Children in Care to Deliver Long-Term, Sustainable Support in Education

Mission

Improve the lives of Looked-after Young people – opening the door to aspirations – university and beyond



First Star (FS) improves outcomes for young people growing up in care. The charity was established by Peter Samuelson in USA in 2011. It has been running in the UK since 2017.

FSSUK is an ambitious programme, empowering the most disadvantaged young people to access Higher Education (HE).

FS is currently working with 18 HE institutions, globally.

Our newest programme is an online version with a summer residential built in

What We Do



We partner with universities to offer an innovative 4-year preparatory programme

Each programme recruits 30 Year-9 students from the local area (nationally for FS2U) that are in care, liaising with virtual schools and designated teachers

We mentor these students for four years, offering stability and support through bespoke intervention. The programme is entirely free to the participants

Students attend summer residentials, monthly Saturday sessions / online sessions. They are supported in 1-2-1 and group settings. Programmes are tailored to scholars' needs

FS values scholars' voice – our scholars' council sends representatives to the Board of Trustees and ensuring scholars give direction to the programme in needs, interests and aspirations.

Our programme focuses on personal learning needs and encourages individual development and engagement. GCSE English, Maths and Science are core in years 1& 2. Leadership, careers and transitional skills are formed throughout the four years and all scholars have the opportunity to undertake level 3 and level 4 diplomas in Learning, Development and Social Empowerment.



- Enabling children to develop strong relationships with one another and build a support network
- Summer residences for 4 years
- First Saturday programme / online learning
- Supported by staff plus mentors and youth coaches



www.firststaruk.org

the programme

Exposure to, and a sense of belonging in, higher education is at the heart of the academy experience.

Students embrace campus living, experiencing living together, eating, doing laundry and sharing learning and social spaces with other groups.

Student societies, sports and recreation and a variety of degree subject areas are explored in partnership with local universities and other providers.

www.firststaruk.org

Case Study: Working with Children in
Care to Deliver Long-Term,
Sustainable Support in Education



www.firststaruk.org

- Constructing partnerships: third sector partners supporting young people collaboratively
- Partnering with universities
- Innovative 4-year university-preparatory programme

BENEFITS FOR THE UNIVERSITY?

"Universities have an irreplaceable and unique role in helping their host communities thrive – and their own success is bound up with the success of the places that gave birth to them."

Commission Chair Lord Bob Kerslake - Civic University Network

- Diversity in future cohorts – plurality of voice
- Support from local community – closing the gown/town divide
- Importance of 'stepping outside the front door'; High Tariff Universities are of international repute – local connections are vital to sustained success

"Everyone is our neighbour, no matter what race, creed, or colour... a blend of traditions serves to make us stronger, individually and collectively, by providing the ingredients needed for social, political and economic resilience"

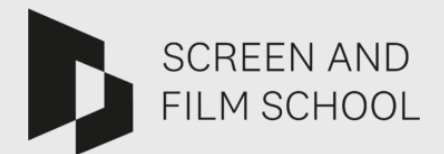
Queen Elizabeth II

Programme contributors and engagement include

- ❖ University departments – coaching and teaching sessions + catering, library, housekeeping and sports staff and beyond
- ❖ PYE Global
- ❖ Sky Education
- ❖ Villiers Park Education Trust
- ❖ Kidscape will be bringing trauma informed practice to our partners / school locations for scholars
- ❖ Virtual Schools and schools – including attending PEP meetings
- ❖ Carers
- ❖ Social Workers
- ❖ Third sector – Become / Mybnk / speakers trust / Sister Systems / Lighthouse
- ❖ Transcend Awards – OfQual accredited provider for our Diplomas

Working with HE Partners :-

- St Mary's University, Twickenham
- University of Winchester
- University of Sussex
- University of Wolverhampton Aspire2University programme
- Screen and Film School Brighton



Case Study: Working with Children in
Care to Deliver Long-Term,
Sustainable Support in Education



www.firststaruk.org

- Bringing children into the service design/delivery process by listening to their views and tailoring programmes accordingly
- Scholars council and voice
- Programme development

The programme



www.firststaruk.org

Academic skills

GCSEs, particularly English, maths and science sessions. Science experiments, problem solving, and essential writing skills coupled with revision sessions across a range of subjects - an approach that has been well received by students.

- Individual tutoring
- Baseline to develop programme to match need
- Fill gaps not curriculum
- Level 3 Diploma – recognising personal progress

Post 16

- Embracing transition skills, vocational skills, leadership challenges
- Level 4 Diploma credits - preparing for university level study and world of work / vocational and apprenticeship courses

In 2021 our first graduating cohort saw 50% of scholars awarded places in HE compared to 13% nationally (age 18-23yrs).

- Scholars from each programme join the Scholar's Council and elect Board reps
- **Two scholars advise the board of trustees**
- Each programme is unique reflecting the needs of individuals.
- Opportunities for feedback and engagement in programme design are ongoing, including carers and scholars in design and delivery



"First star is for children in care that aspire to go to university and they give us a lot of amazing opportunities and this was by far one of my favourite ones as I get to give back to the community".

"I learnt the basic essentials of life. My maths and English grades went up"

"Independence + more friends that are in care and understand me"

"I have learned life skills such as cooking which has benefited me"

"I am more optimistic and appreciate life more"

"It has opened new doors that I thought would never be opened"

"First Star has changed the way I think about university. I also feel like First Star has given me more independence"

"I feel like people listen to me and I am part of a community"

"thanks for the summer academy it's given me so much more confidence"



www.firststaruk.org

programme

Life skills sessions

- self soothing
- anger management
- emotional regulation
- nutrition
- financial literacy
- self-advocacy
- technology enhanced learning
- career readiness
- resilience
- social justice
- philanthropic activity
- health and wellness
- study skills
- access to related resources, including foster carer support

WHAT SCHOLARS SAY...

- “I learnt the essentials of life. My Maths and English grades went up!”
- “I am optimistic and I appreciate life more”
- “It has opened doors I never thought would open”
- “I feel like people listen to me and I am part of a community”



Stability

- ❖ Child moves placement every 20 minutes in England
- ❖ 80% have used bin liners in their moves

Hope

- ❖ 48% of care experienced young people in mainstream schools are not being entered for qualifications (University of Wolverhampton, 2022)
- ❖ Only 30.6% of care experienced young people achieve any GCSE passes (A2U, 2022)

Case Study: Working with Children in Care to Deliver Long-Term, Sustainable Support in Education

- Long term goals: to ensure young people can recognise and pursue their interests
- Close the attainment gap between Children in Care and their peers



MONITORING & EVALUATION

Baseline assessments –
as the students join the
programme

Individual progress –
monitored with tutors
and schools (end of year
exams/attendance/social
development)

Personal Education Plans
are regularly reviewed

Diploma level 3 and 4
offered – OfQual
accredited assessment

GCSE outcomes

Embedded
assessment in diploma
delivery, moderated by
Transcend Awards

What We Offer – A holistic programme



Academic Progress

GCSE support, focus on core subjects; revision; A-Level transition; HE application



Creative Engagement

Imagination; confidence; connection through the Arts



Personal Development

Nutrition; financial literacy; resilience; digital literacy; careers development; advocacy



Social Action

Forward giving project – students advocate for/fund those in need; social debate; volunteering



Challenge and Adventure

Team building; overnight trips; sports; immersion in HE life

Our Outcomes

FSSUK PARTICIPANTS 2021	NATIONALLY
58% achieved 5 or more GCSEs (including English and Maths grade 4 or above)	17.5% for looked after children (LAC) (DfE, 2018)
32% passed GCSE English and Maths at grade 5	10% LAC achieved these grade 5s
5% became NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training)	39% of care leavers are currently NEETs
0% become homeless	25% of care leavers experience homelessness within 2 years of independence
0% are incarcerated	40% of current prisoners under the age of 21 are care leavers
50% transition to university	6% of care leavers (age 19-21) transition to university

GCSE outcomes for 2021 - cohort 2

89% of GCSE grades were passes @ grade 4.	76.9% nationally
67% of GCSE grades were passed @ grade 5	62.8% nationally
63% achieved grade 4 or above in maths	69.2 % nationally
79% achieved grade 4 or above in English	73.6% nationally

Average eBacc score 5.28.	4.38 nationally (2020)	1.7 for LAC
Attainment 8 score = 47.1.	50.2 nationally	21.4 for LAC