The Quality Mark is awarded to institutions that can demonstrate that they have a sufficiently robust strategy in place to support students from a care background. The Commitment though does not set a tick-box checklist for institutions to work through as each institution works within its own systems to support students from care. It is accepted that certain measures may work well for one institution but not for another and the criteria have therefore been developed with flexibility to accommodate these differences. Buttle UK encourages creativity and initiative from institutions in developing their Quality Mark strategies.

### Raising aspiration and pre-entry outreach

- Develop effective links with local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, schools, colleges, foster care providers 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.

- Ensure outreach activities are accessible for those in care/care leavers - such as taster days, open days, summer schools - and their carers, and that costs are not a barrier to participation.

- Encourage access to FE/HE for children and young people in care/care leavers and include them as a specific target group within access schemes (e.g. compacts, special consideration arrangements).

- Provide impartial pre-entry guidance on FE/HE study.

- Provide impartial pre-entry financial advice and information on support services available.

- Effectively publicise the support your institution offers to potential students with a care background and those colleagues in local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, colleges, etc. who are supporting them in their educational progression.
Application, entry and induction

• Identify a designated member of staff to act as a key point of contact and advisor for children and young people in care/care leavers to provide support prior to and on entry.

• Have in place methods of identifying applicants from care and establish contact with them as appropriate, pre- and post-enrolment.

• Ensure information on the full range of support offered to young people from care is readily available and easily accessible (financial, welfare and accommodation, academic) i.e. via dedicated website pages.

• Offer identified personal support before the course starts and identify arrangements for any continuing support post enrolment if required.

• Where required, support students seeking accommodation (FE) or to secure 365-day accommodation over the full life of their course (HE).

• Where appropriate offer flexible application arrangements e.g. compacts, interview guarantees.

On-going support

• A designated member of staff to act as a key point of contact and advisor throughout the duration of the student’s course.

• Ensure that the individual’s circumstances are reflected in the support offered and accommodated within processes related to application, bursary and other funding provision.

• With 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.

• Ensure that sources of financial support for the learner are in place through working with the local authority and appropriate partners and ensure that individuals are aware of any additional financial support offered by the institution and how to access it (e.g. Bursaries, Access to Learning Fund, Hardship Fund, benefits).

• 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.

• Offer wider staff training across the institution on issues affecting children and young people in care /leaving care.

• Ensure systems are in place to identify and support students at risk of dropping out or not reaching their academic potential.

Monitoring the Commitment

• 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.

• Ensure application, enrolment and progression data for this group is collected and monitored for annual submission to Buttle UK.

• Collect and collate feedback from learners to engage them in evaluating the quality of their experience and assist in facilitating feedback to Buttle UK.

• Ensure relevant staff across the institution are aware of issues relating to the needs of students with a care background.

• Contribute to sharing of best practice via Buttle UK with colleagues in local authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, FE and HE.

The Quality Mark is an institutional award and FE colleges with HE provision will need to demonstrate that both the institution’s FE and HE sectors meet the Quality Mark criteria, and that support is coherent between the two sectors.

For full information about Buttle UK and the Quality Mark, please visit www.buttleuk.org or contact: Buttle UK, Audley House, 13 Palace Street, London SW1E 5HX
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The Buttle UK Quality Mark
Criteria