



# NNECL quality mark framework to the improve support for care experienced people in colleges and universities

February 2019

## Context

The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) is a registered charity (charity number 1180793), founded to support the improvement of practice, local and national collaboration, and progression into and through further and higher education for care experienced young people.<sup>1</sup>

NNECL is led by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for the strategic direction of the network. The Board of Trustees is supported by the National Strategy Group (NSG) which includes representation from universities, colleges, local authorities and relevant charities and third sector organisations. The NSG act as a central forum, its efforts are focused on understanding and responding to the needs of professionals across the country in a systematic way.

NNECL is currently hosted by the University of Winchester. The Board of Trustees are currently overseeing NNECL's transition to a future legal and operating model as an independent charity which will enable NNECL to operate independently and become financially secure. This project plays a key role in NNECL's future sustainability plans.

## Aim

We have secured funding through the UPP Foundation<sup>2</sup> to deliver the following project:

**Develop and test a quality mark framework to improve support for care experienced people in colleges and universities, so establishing a mechanism for sustained improvements in professional practice, institutional strategy and national policy.**

The project supports the NNECL commissioned research 'Moving on Up'<sup>3</sup> led by Dr Neil Harrison, which highlighted that 'even once entry qualifications are taken into account, care leavers were 38% more likely to withdraw from their course and not return' (Harrison, 2017). The report also identified the need for: stronger relationships between universities and local authorities; better-equipped staff; and more targeted support. The research recommended that NNECL explore the development of a quality mark.

The project supports NNECL's long-term goal to see at least 50% of higher education institutions developing targeted support for care experienced people at every phase (access, retention and employability) by 2022. It is hoped the framework will become the national standard for higher education support for care experienced students and will benefit thousands of students each year.

NNECL is part of an exciting collaboration with the Centre for Social Justice and First Star Academies which will allow us to build on the research outcomes of the 12 for 24 initiative within the NNECL quality mark framework. We will also be working with Spectra First and the Department for Education to explore ways in which NNECL can

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<sup>1</sup> More information about NNECL can be found here: <http://www.nnecl.org>

<sup>2</sup> More information about the UPP Foundation can be found here: <http://upp-foundation.org/>

<sup>3</sup> The full 'Moving on Up' report can be accessed here: <http://nnecl.org/resources/moving-on-up-report?topic=guides-and-toolkits>



support the Care Leaver Covenant outcomes.

## Specification

We are seeking an experienced organisation and/or development professional to lead on the development and testing of the quality mark framework and the accompanying assessment guidance.

### Key milestones

- March- August 2019: Draft quality framework developed and tested
- August 2019: Quality framework complete
- Aug-Nov 2019: Quality framework assessment guidance developed
- Nov-Dec 2019: Framework and assessment guidance complete  
Project evaluation and reporting completed

The project specification will require the successful consultant to work with a representative sample of FE and HE institutions (of varying sizes, mission groups, geographies and profiles) to identify the standards that define best practice and to test the proposed framework. The project will be overseen by the Board of Trustees, via the NNECL Network Coordinator based at the University of Winchester.

## Outputs and outcomes

The successful contract holder will produce:

- A quality framework outlining the key features of effective strategy and activity for further and higher education institutions;
- Assessment guidance that supports the effective deployment of the framework within institutions;
- A project evaluation summarising the findings of the sector research that underpins the final framework, guidance and assessment documentation.

Outcomes:

- Pilot the framework with a representative sample of institutions, so that it is ready for scaling up;
- Identify the features of effective institutions in relation to high quality support for care experienced people;
- Create a practical, engaging and robust evidence-based framework (and associated guidance) that enables institutions to improve their support, demonstrate their commitment, and establish robust accountability mechanisms;
- Lay the foundation for establishing a well-evidenced, national mechanism for NNECL to raise awareness of the needs of care experienced people, increase the commitment and capacity of institutions to support them, and provide a robust account of the scale and nature of this work across the sector.

To ensure the success of this important project we are seeking:

- Secure clear, practical and robust expert advice;



- Someone with experience of developing accreditation schemes or frameworks, preferably in the education sector;
- Someone with experience of managing stakeholders and working collaboratively;
- Someone with a strong interest in understanding of the issues affecting the education of children in care and care experienced students.

## Contract Value

The budget for the consultancy contract is £5,000 (inc. VAT). There is a small budget to support project expenses such as meeting costs and travel.

## Guidance for Submissions

Expressions of interest for this contract should be submitted via email to [info@nnecl.org](mailto:info@nnecl.org) by **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March**.

Please provide the following information. Your information should not be more than two sides of A4.

- Your interest in the project
- Your eligibility to undertake the work within the proposed timeline
- A budget breakdown confirming how you plan to spend the funds
- You may like to supply relevant supplementary information e.g. CVs.