



H.E. 4 ME

Specific advice and information to support you through your journey to higher education as a learner with care experience



KNOW YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

As a young person with care experience, you are often entitled to additional support when applying to and studying at university. Take a look at the information below to understand what this support might be, then use the table to see the types of support each university offers.

1. ACCESS AND PATHWAYS PROGRAMMES

These are specialist programmes of activity that universities put on for pupils with additional barriers within the education system. These can start as early as secondary school, and include mentoring and coaching sessions, university-based experiences, or trips and residentials to help you better understand the pathways available to you when you leave school.

2. CONTEXTUAL GRADE OFFERS

This is where universities offer a slightly different set of grade boundaries to access a certain course. It may be slightly lower than those expected from your peers, who haven't faced the challenges you have.

3. ACCESS TO SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

Scholarships and bursaries offer you additional financial support towards your studies or life at university that you won't be expected to pay back.

4. SPECIFIC SUPPORT WITH ACCOMMODATION

Many universities have dedicated people within the accommodation support team that are knowledgeable about the barriers care experienced learners might face when accessing accommodation on campus or beyond. They can support you through the application process, as well as being on hand once you have moved in.

5. DEDICATED CONTACT POINT

This is a single point of contact for care experienced learners to go to with any questions or concerns they have during their studies. They are often based on campus but can also be reached online or on the phone.

6. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT DURING STUDIES

Most universities recognise that care experienced learners might face very specific challenges as they move through their studies, so offer lots of free guidance and support whilst you are studying with them.

LOCAL UNIVERSITY OFFERINGS

Use this table to see what your local universities can offer you as a learner with care experience.

	Access and pathways programmes	Contextual grade offers	Access to scholarships and bursaries	Specific support with accommodation	Dedicated contact point	Additional support during studies
ASTON UNIVERSITY	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓		✓
BIRMINGHAM CITY UNIVERSITY	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
KEELE UNIVERSITY	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
THE UNIVERSITY OF LAW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER	✓	Contact the university	✓	✓	✓	✓

QUESTIONS TO ASK

If you decide you want to attend some university open days or events, we've provided a helpful guide on the type of questions to ask to make sure you get the most out of the experience.

- What support do you have for people with care experience applying to this university?
- Do you offer contextual grades?
- What support or advice is available for the application process?
- What support do you offer with regards to accommodation?
- Do you offer special support with my studies once I'm here?
- Do specific subject areas offer any specific support?
- Do you have a high number of care experienced learners already studying with you?
- What do your students say about you in your student surveys?
- What are your graduate employment rates like?



WHO CAN HELP?

There are many charities and organisations that offer specific support to learners with care experience. Many of these offer support when it comes to higher education, as well as general support and guidance.

BECOME



BECOME want you to know you are not alone. You can WhatsApp, call or email them to get help, support and guidance – or if you just need someone to listen to you. They campaign to government to improve the provisions for young people with care experience and can help you on every step of your journey from starting out to leaving care and beyond.

PROPEL



Propel is part of the wider charity BECOME and is your guide to higher and further education for care leavers. There is loads of support available to help you achieve great things. They provide help, support, and advice so that young people who spend time in care can unleash their potential and take control of their lives.

THE CARE LEAVERS' ASSOCIATION



The Care Leavers Association is “an ever growing network of care leavers.”

Their vision is for “a good life in care, a good life after care.”

Their mission is “to bring together the voices of care leavers of all ages so that we improve the current care system, improve the quality of life of care

leavers throughout their life and change for the better society’s perception of people who have been in care.”

UCAS



UCAS is the central hub for all university applications. They have lots of information and support available to you, and detail all the different entitlements you could receive for being care experienced from any universities you are interested in.

Top Tip: Make sure you disclose you are care experienced in any application you make as this will ensure you receive the right support and entitlements and will not disadvantage your application in any way.

STUDENT LOANS COMPANY



Specific support is available to learners with care experience from the Students Loans Company if you decide to go to university and apply for a loan. They can help to ensure you receive the funding you will need to go to university.

Top Tip: Make sure you disclose you are care experienced in any application you make as this will ensure you receive the right support and entitlements and will not disadvantage your application in any way.

JACOB'S STORY

We spoke to Jacob, who is currently studying at the University of Birmingham, about his experiences and journey as a care experienced student.

Hi Jacob, thank you for chatting with us today. I know you are currently a student at the University of Birmingham. Would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself and your current studies there?

Hi, it's a pleasure to be here. I'm about to go into my second year as a History and Politics student at the University of Birmingham.

As a learner with care experience, what was the journey to university like for you? Did you have any worries or reservations? What do you think some of the barriers are?

I actually started to look into university in Year 9. I looked through university brochures and went to different university events such as the large showcase at the NEC in Birmingham that happens each year. Going to University in America also really appealed to me as I've always been really interested in American history and politics, so I did lots of research online about my different options.

I think the biggest barrier is the financial aspect. Unfortunately, in the care system, you get to 18 and you feel a bit on your own, with most

of the help available to you coming from your local authority which can vary depending on where you live. So having the option to go to university actually made me feel really safe – lots of them offer great packages to support learners like me with care experience. I'd make sure you check the care experience packages at any universities you are interested in – you'd be surprised how much is available to you!

What would your biggest piece of advice be for someone with care-experience thinking of applying for university?

It would definitely be ticking that care experience box on UCAS. It makes such a difference. At some of the universities I applied to, they were able to offer me a one or two grade reduction offer which took a bit of pressure off and felt really helpful.

Some people might feel that disclosing their situation to universities might disadvantage them in some way. What would you say to that?

Absolutely not. If anything, I think it can enhance your personal



statement. Support for care experienced learners is something that universities take really seriously, and most universities want to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to apply, so try not to feel ashamed or reluctant to tell them about any specific life experiences or conditions you have.

What has your experience of university been like so far?

I've had such a great first year at university. I made sure to get involved in lots of different societies, activities and events. I'm the secretary of the Debating Society which has taken me around the country debating at different universities with my team. I've also got involved in organising lots of Freshers event. Next year, I hope to get more involved with the Labour Society – I joined them in this year's General Election Campaign which was such fun!

Wow! You've been so involved, it sounds great. When you look back, were there any role models in your life that inspired you?

Some of my foster parents definitely inspired me to want to achieve great things and I'm really grateful to them for that. I have also been inspired by books; I love to read biographies of famous people as they help me to see

the life paths different people take to become successful. I particularly like the biographies of people in politics – they are my biggest inspiration. I would like to be a teacher one day, then eventually a member of parliament.

Great! I hope you achieve that, Jacob. What do you feel the impact of going to university will have on your life?

I think having the opportunity to be a student is such a great experience for anyone, even if you have no idea what you want to do later on in life. Because I want to be a teacher, I know I have to have a degree, so its going to be crucial for me in that respect.

Finally, can you leave us with one last bit of advice or inspiration to take away today?

I'd say never put off until tomorrow what can be done today. Keep striving to put in effort and work. Just because you're care experienced, doesn't mean your life is defined by that. You deserve a chance to make your life what you want it to be.

Thank you so much for talking to us Jacob, you are an inspiration.



For more information about Aimhigher,
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