



# A Guide for Care-Experienced Students





# Important Contacts

**Senior College Lead, Learner Experience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Named Contact for Care-Experienced Students:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Designated Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact your named care-experienced student college contact if you need help with:**

- A bank account
- Finding work experience (depending on your level and area of study)
- Finding care leaver friendly paid work/employment
- Finding apprenticeships (and support applying)
- Leaving care/transitioning to independent living
- Transitioning to University
- Academic support (college studies)
- Accessing free legal support or advocacy
- CV and employability support
- Universal Credit support
- Finding leisure activities.



# Preparing for College



## MAKING AN APPLICATION

If you are unsure which course you'd like to study, you may be able to attend a taster session for the subject(s) you are interested in.

If you know which course you'd like to apply for, you can apply directly on our website. Click on the course you are interested in studying and click 'Apply Now'.

Once you've been accepted for a course, you will need to come and enroll at the college before you start, so make sure you keep an eye on your emails for your invitation.

# Support Starting College

## IF YOU'RE AGED 16-18

### **16-18 Enhanced Bursary**

As a Looked After learner, you are 'needs assessed'. This means you will need to apply for a bursary through your college.

You will need evidence of your care status such as a section 20 letter or supporting letter from your local authority dated within the last three months (this is a letter from your social worker or borough confirming that you are in their care or were in their care at some point in your childhood).

You do not need a bank account to make the application

### **Borrowing a college laptop**

If you don't have access to a computer at home, you may be entitled to the use of a college laptop for the entire academic year.

### **Supporting your progression**

As part of your Care Plan as a Looked After learner, the college is required to complete a **PEP (Personal Education Plan)** meeting every term with you, your guardian, Social Worker, college Designated Teacher and your Virtual School Teacher, to discuss your progress, wishes, feelings and aspirations.



## IF YOU'RE AGED 19+

### **Advanced Learner Loan**

This could include a contribution to childcare costs, free lunch on full college days, reimbursement for college books, trips and educational visits. You will need to apply for your bursary through the government website, but you can contact the college bursary team with any queries. [gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan](https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan)



# Supporting You

## IF YOU DON'T HAVE:

### Access to your section 20 letter

Contact your Personal Advisor, Social Worker, or the Leaving Care Team at your Local Authority (borough you were looked after by) and request a copy to be emailed to you.

### A bank account

Opening a bank account can be challenging, especially if you don't have a passport or ID. If you are a Care Leaver, evidence can be provided by your Local Authority and verified by METRO bank, to support you opening an account.

If you are currently in Foster Care, evidence can be provided by an official provider (e.g. the Local Authority or government) confirming the foster carer and living address **alongside** a Birth Certificate or ARC card.

**Please note that we cannot guarantee that an account will be opened as every person's circumstances are different.**

### Internet access/WiFi at home

TalkTalk are offering **6 months FREE broadband and unlimited data** to eligible candidates. To take up this offer head to your local Job Centre Plus, or go to this website and check your eligibility:

**[mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/free-broadband-unlimited-data-talktalk](https://mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/free-broadband-unlimited-data-talktalk)**





## DID YOU KNOW?

- If you are a Care Leaver in full-time education, **you may be exempt from paying council tax.**
- If you are a Care Leaver and live independently, you may be entitled to up to **70% off your water bill** through discounted tariffs.
- If you are a Care Leaver, aged 25 or under and you are in full-time education, you should not be expected to attend the Job Centre Plus for appointments in person to claim **Universal Credit**, especially during college hours. Your education takes priority, and you should not be expected to look for work during this time.
- You can access free **additional tuition for English and maths** in college with Get Further by emailing [hello@getfurther.org.uk](mailto:hello@getfurther.org.uk) If you are struggling with a different academic subject, please contact your Progression Coordinator.
- You can access **free counselling through the college** if you're struggling emotionally or with your mental health. Please speak to a member of your support team to be referred.

# Financial and Independent Living Support

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM CHARITIES

- **Spark Foundation** awards grants of £600 towards expenses including driving lessons, activities and holidays, or setting up home.  
[www.sparkfoundation.org.uk/FAQGrants.html](http://www.sparkfoundation.org.uk/FAQGrants.html)
- **Capstone Care Leavers Trust** awards grants to people aged 17-25 for further education courses, higher education courses, training courses, laptops, study materials, driving lessons, and household goods (such as sofas, chairs, cookers, fridge, freezer, washing machine etc.)  
[www.capstonecareleavertrust.org/eligibility-criteria](http://www.capstonecareleavertrust.org/eligibility-criteria)
- **REES Foundation** provides support for Care Leavers regardless of age. You can sign up to their amazing newsletter here: Email News Letter Sign Up (jotform.com) [www.reesfoundation.org](http://www.reesfoundation.org)
- **Turn2Us** help people understand what benefits and grants they are eligible for. [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)



# INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORT

- **The House Project** is a national organisation started by Care Leavers who felt that the way they were being put into independence was unfair. It provides an opportunity for young people leaving care to work collaboratively and become a team, to support each other, learn the skills you need to be independent, and fix up and look after a property that will become your home for as long as you want to live there. (Check with your Local Authority).

<https://www.thehouseproject.org/for-young-people>

- **Pantry** offers affordable food. No evidence is required for Care Leavers to access this service. You pay £6 and receive £30-£40 of shopping. When you no longer need the service, you can stop.

<https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk/pantry-listings>

# Progression and Employment

## Progression support and advice (including employment):

- **BECOME** offers advice and guidance for care-experienced young people up to age 27, if you have any questions about your rights and entitlements (be it financial support, housing, education, life coaching etc) or if you just need someone to talk to about how you're feeling. Call free on 0800 023 2033 or visit their website at [becomecharity.org.uk](https://becomecharity.org.uk)
- **EY Foundation** supports young people from low-income backgrounds to get paid work experience, employability skills training and career guidance. <https://eyfoundation.com/uk/en/home.html>
- **SmartWorks** provides one-hour, one-to-one interview preparation and confidence building sessions **for women seeking employment**, and a bespoke dressing consultation with two trained volunteers, to find an interview outfit that will fill you with confidence. This is free of charge and the clothes are yours to keep. **Please contact your named college contact to be referred for this service.** <https://smartworks.org.uk>



# Preparing for University

## **If you are 25 or under and do not currently have a Personal Advisor**

assigned to you from your Local Authority, please contact them and request one if you plan on attending University. They'll be able to help you understand and access all the grants and support you are eligible for as a Care Leaver in the months leading up to your degree.

When applying for degrees, you can compare university offers of support for Care Leavers through <https://propel.org.uk/UK/>. Make sure you look at the offers of support for Care Leavers pre-application, during your application and after enrolment at the University. Do they have a specified point of contact for support through application? Do they give a contextual offer for Care Leavers (where the entry grade requirement for the course is lower than standard)? What is the value of their annual Care Leaver bursary payment? Do they have mentoring programs?

Many universities offer a **'Supported Entry Scheme'**, which offers benefits such as contextual offers, a specified point of contact for support through application, mentoring programs and university visits.

For help with your **personal statement**, contact your Careers Advisor or Progression Coordinator.

Make sure you **use all your UCAS choices** on your application.

Be careful **applying to different degrees at the same university through UCAS**, if it's a competitive course as it may look like you're unsure of what you want to do. For example, Midwifery tends to be a very competitive course so in this instance it's advisable to **not put down another subject**, such as Adult Nursing degrees. Admissions tutors will want to see your commitment to that course. If you're unsure, ask your college Careers Advisor for guidance or contact the university you're applying to.

Visit the university campus and get a **bespoke tour**.

Make sure you apply as a Care Leaver when applying for your Student Finance. **[www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/care-leavers](http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/care-leavers)**

**Unite Foundation Scholarship** offers free accommodation to successful candidates. They also cover your bills for up to three years of study. **[thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation-scholarship](http://thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation-scholarship)**

**The Sanctuary Scholarship** is for **anyone who has been offered a place at university and is seeking asylum or with refugee status in the United Kingdom**. To be eligible to apply for the Sanctuary Scholarship, you must hold one of the following immigration statuses: UK asylum seeker, UK discretionary leave to remain (as a result of an asylum application), UK limited leave to remain (as a result of an asylum application), or Humanitarian protection (as a result of an asylum application). You will also be eligible if you are a dependent of someone with one of these immigration statuses. **Research online to find out which UK universities offer Sanctuary Scholarships.**

**Progression Offers for Care Leavers:**

### Care Leaver Covenant

Sign up to **Connects** for updates on all opportunities from work and education to recreational offers and giveaways. **[mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/](http://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/)**

**SCAN ME**  
Find out more about  
**connects!** >>



**Please contact your named college contact via Teams or email for help accessing any of the opportunities detailed in this manual.**

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