

THE SURREY

Care Leavers' Higher Education Support Package



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL



Introduction

As a care leaver you would not generally be entitled to Universal Credit while undertaking a course of higher education (HE) so this is a quick reference document about the support you can access.

If there is anything you are not sure about or do not understand in this document, please speak to your Personal Advisor (PA).

If you would prefer a paper copy of this document or require this in a different language or format, please speak to your PA.

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Financial

When applying to university, many students are worried about managing their money – and for students from a care background, this may seem like a particular challenge.

You should apply for student finance to cover your tuition fees and maintenance as an **independent student** – this means your household income is not to be taken into account in calculating what you can receive. There are guides to help you apply for student finance in [England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

When it comes to repaying any student loan, don't worry – you won't be expected to start making payments until you graduate and are earning above a certain amount. [Read all about student finance and how to apply around the UK](#)

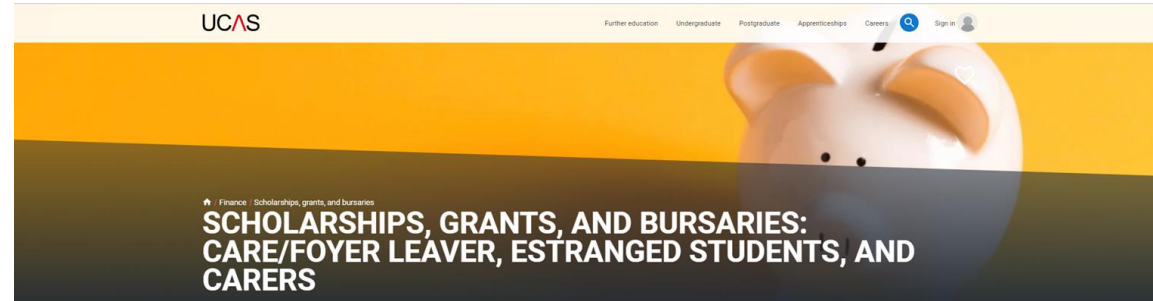
In addition, you may be eligible for further financial help as a care-experienced student, such as:

- **England and Wales:** A Higher Education Bursary, which you don't pay back – contact your local authority or personal advisor for details.
- **Bursaries from a university or college:** Many universities and colleges offer bursaries for care-experienced students that you don't have to repay, and some offer grants or loans to help you manage any additional expenses (e.g. specialist equipment). Speak to the university or college directly, or [check the Propel website](#).
- **Charitable organisations:** There are a number of organisations offering grants, bursaries and scholarships, including [Unite Foundation](#), [Buttle UK](#), and the [Care Leavers' Foundation](#).

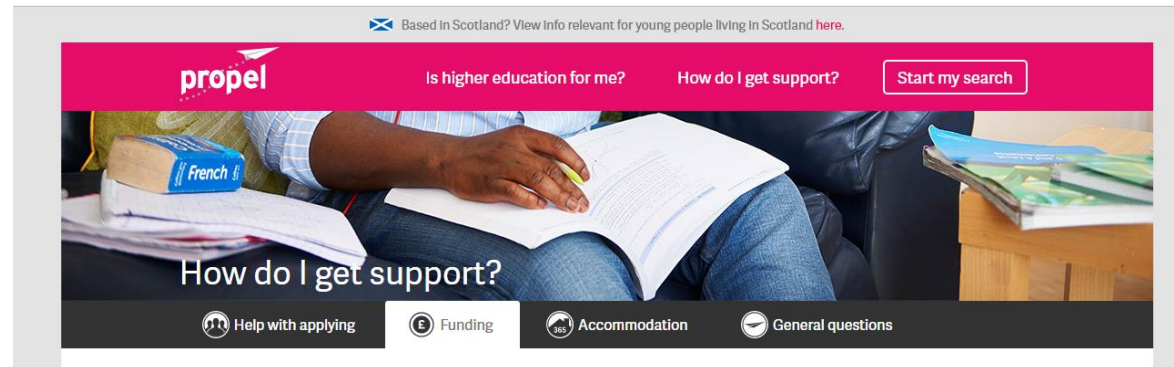


Financial (continued)

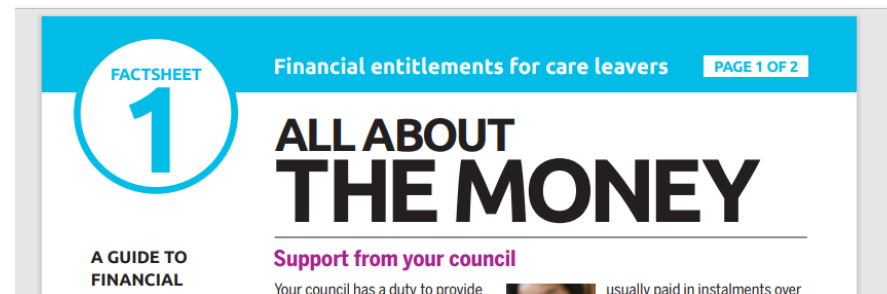
Find more information about scholarships, grants, and bursaries for care experienced, estranged and foyer students.



Read more about funding in higher education for care experienced students on the Propel website.



Find out more about financial support for care leavers on the Become website.





Accommodation

Many universities and colleges help care-experienced students to find appropriate accommodation. This varies greatly from one institution to another, so make sure you check early on in your research, as it could be an important factor when you're choosing where to study.

Help may include:

- free or discounted accommodation;
- year-round accommodation (including over the holiday periods);
- a guaranteed room in university accommodation for the duration of your course;
- no guarantor requirement – or the university will act as guarantor on your behalf;
- no deposit needed, or reduced cost;
- grants to help you cover living costs over the holiday periods;
- starter packs to help you get the equipment you need (e.g. bedding) or vouchers.

Support from Surrey Care Leavers' Service

Workshops led by the Education, Employment and Training Advisor from Surrey Virtual School offering practical tips, advice and support on the higher education application process. The date and time of up coming workshops will be shared on the Local Offer website once confirmed.

[Our local offer to care leavers - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://surreycc.gov.uk)

UCAS fees can be requested from the Care Leavers' Service if necessary. The application form can be found using the link below. All young people need to register in the UCAS Hub to start and access their application. There is only one single sign-in for students to both access their application and track their offers and decisions.

You may watch a recording of the latest full webinar about the [UCAS application process](#).

Following your acceptance to higher education, the Care Leavers' Service will gather the required evidence and carry out an assessment of need and may provide the following financial support:

HE accommodation costs during the holidays: As outlined above you will be eligible for student finance loans and are expected to fund course tuition fees and the cost of halls/student accommodation for the duration of your course (if other grant/benefits are not awarded by your chosen institution).

However, The Care Leavers' Service can fund accommodation costs during the holidays, e.g. 'staying put' arrangements on a pro-rata basis whilst you are in HE. (This will be subject to evidence of your attendance and attainment provided by your tutor on a termly basis). The funding will be in line with the local housing allowance rate for the area.

Living Allowance: - Half of the current Universal Credit Allowance rate, will be paid over the duration of the course, during term-time.





Support from Surrey Care Leavers' Service (continued)

Bursary - In line with regulations, a one-off higher education bursary of £2,000 will be awarded for the duration of the course, paid in instalments of £250 on a termly basis, to all care leavers undertaking a higher education course, (subject to evidence of a minimum of 85% attendance). This does not include one-year Access Foundation courses which may be undertaken before a degree course.

Internet costs of up to £20 per month.

Books and equipment - Up to £100 for essential books . Requests for specialist equipment will be assessed. Contributions will be considered on an individual basis.

Support to care leavers undertaking work placements during their courses. Students will be expected to secure all relevant bursaries/loans for which they are eligible. Care Leavers should check with their institution to understand what financial support is available whilst they are on the work placement.

In the event that students have to move to an area where housing costs are higher in order to secure a work experience placement, the Local Authority would pay the difference between the Local Housing rate in the university area and that in the area where students are living in order to undertake the work placement.

Surrey's policy regarding acting as a guarantor for Care Leavers can be found in the Guarantor Scheme (see [the link](#) below and refer to section 5 onwards for relevant details): Please note that course fees are not covered by Surrey and the finance policy does not cover the full or partial costs to young people of continuing in education on post-graduate courses such as Master's Degrees or Doctorate studies.

Returning to Education

Care Leavers wishing to return to the service to re-enter education aged 21 plus must:

- Have started their course of education before their 25th birthday.
- Provide evidence from the Home Office for former UASC of their entitlement to remain in the UK, confirming that this extends to the end date of the course.
- Meet the entry requirements for the course.
- Have confirmation of an accepted offer of a place on the course.
- Be pursuing a recognised full-time education course of 16+ hours a week.

For Care Leavers turning 25 during their undergraduate course, support will be provided to the end of the academic year in which they turn 25, with an assessment of need to identify further sources of funding.

If you previously ended your involvement with us and are now a returning Care Leaver who is requesting funding from the Local Authority in relation to re-entering education, this would be determined through an assessment of need under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.





Additional Sources of Financial Support

- Community Foundation for Surrey - [Home - Community Foundation for Surrey \(cfsurrey.org.uk\)](#)
- Surrey's Young People's Fund - [Surrey Young People's Fund - Community Foundation for Surrey \(cfsurrey.org.uk\)](#)
- Care Leavers foundation - [Welcome To The Care Leavers Foundation : The Care Leavers Foundation](#)
- Care advice line for care experienced young people - [Home Page - Become \(becomecharity.org.uk\)](#)

Other Useful Links and Resources

If you are applying to attend university as a Care Leaver, below are some organisations and resources you might find useful as can be found:

Advice and information

Uni life - IMO (imohub.org.uk)

Coram Voice offers advice, support and advocacy to Care Leavers.

Propel supports Care Leavers to achieve their higher education goals.

Help at Hand is an advice line run by the Children's Commissioner for England. It provides free, impartial advice and representation to Care Leavers.

Become runs an advice line for young people who are in care and Care Leavers.

Barnardos supports young people leaving care with housing, finances, education and employment.

The Care Leaver Covenant supports Care Leavers with finding accommodation and with educational costs.

The Complete University Guide offers advice on entitlements and support available to Care Leavers attending university.



Other Useful Links and Resources (continued)

National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NECCL) provides advice, guidance and support to Care Leavers in higher education.

Stand Alone provides financial advice to estranged students.

UCAS has a section on its website dedicated to supporting Care Leavers.

Help with accommodation

Unite Foundation offers students free, purpose-built accommodation for up to three years of study, with no rent or bills and has 27 partner universities.

The Care Leaver Covenant supports Care Leavers with finding student accommodation.



Other Useful Links and Resources (continued 2)

Support with finances

Buttle UK offers grants to Care Leavers attending university.

Rees Foundation offers career coaching and grants to help with educational costs.

The Welland Trust offers grants to care-experienced adults to help with their career development and higher education fees.

Capstone Care Leavers' Trust offers advice, support and grants for course fees.

Spark Foundation offers grants of up to £600 for educational costs.

The Care Leaver Covenant supports Care Leavers with educational costs.

The Tunstall Jubilee Foundation offers grants to Care Leavers to help with the costs of education and training.

University of Surrey Information Care Leavers pathways.pptx - Google Drive

December 2022, updated July 2025.

