



Care leavers

Bursaries 

Other support 



What is a care leaver?



A care leaver is a young person who has been in the care of, or has been given accommodation by, their local authority (LA) for a period of at least 13 weeks before the age of 16. They must also not have reconciled with their parents between leaving care and starting their course.

They will be assessed as independent students. This means that their parents' household income will not be taken into account when we are working out how much student finance they can get.

Students who have been looked after by family members or legal guardians (without the involvement of their LA), have a residency order, or have been given accommodation or supported housing by a charity will not be classed as care leavers. These students may be able to apply as an independent student in other ways, for example, by showing they are estranged from their parents.



Evidence

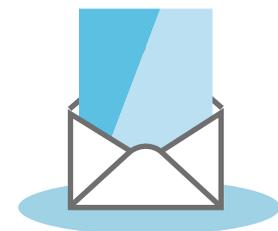


Students who are care leavers will be asked to provide evidence that they were looked after, or have been given accommodation by their LA.

Usually they'll be asked to send a letter from their local council or care authority. This letter should confirm they were under the care of their LA, have now left the care of the LA and are a care leaver as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

They will only have to provide this evidence once, at the start of their course.

If the student can't provide the evidence asked for, they should contact us to discuss their individual circumstances.



What financial support is available?



Students leaving the care of their LA are able to apply for the same support as other students. They're also likely to qualify for additional support.

Care leavers on full and part-time higher-education courses will get funding from the LA that was responsible for their care. This could be in the form of a non-taxable bursary, or help with accommodation or fee costs. This additional support won't be taken into account when calculating how much student finance they can get, meaning they don't have to choose between support from their LA and student finance.

To apply for support from their LA, students should contact their personal advisor, social worker or case worker.

Care leavers may be able to get financial support, for example fee waivers or cash awards, from their university or college. They should speak to their university or college to find out what support is available.



Support for care leavers



Students can access support from their university or college's advice centre or student union.

There are also organisations that provide support for care leavers and students who are estranged from their families.

Stand Alone – www.standalone.org.uk

Propel – www.propel.org.uk

National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) – www.nnecl.org

