

Promoting Positive Outcomes for Care Experienced Students - Policy Statement

1. Commitment

At the University of Bath we are committed to ensuring that students who have experience of being in care have a successful and enjoyable time studying with us. As part of this commitment, we are participating in the NNECL Quality Mark for the Inclusion and Success of Care Experienced Students.

In line with the NNECL Quality Mark, we aim to:

- Create an inclusive culture that is championed by our senior leaders.
- Recognise the disadvantage care experienced students have encountered and play our part to try to counter this.
- Understand our care experienced students so that their views shape the decisions that affect them.
- Proactively monitor our performance so we can continue to improve outcomes for our care experienced students.
- Engage with potential students and anticipate their needs before they arrive.
- Promote the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of our care experienced students.
- Have high expectations for their academic, personal and professional development and support structures that reflect this.
- Collaborate effectively with relevant partners to promote the interests of our care experienced students.

The activities we will undertake to ensure we deliver on our commitments will be outlined in an Action Plan developed during our submission to the NNECL Quality Mark.

This Policy and its accompanying Action Plan are owned and monitored by Professor Cassie Wilson Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Professor Jane White Vice-President (Community and Inclusion)

Our support for care experienced and/or estranged (CEES) begins before students enter the University. We will ensure that CEES students have met and engaged with our dedicated support teams and that they are aware of all the support on offer. This approach will then be supported by individual meetings and a designated point of contact who supports them throughout their student journey. This approach is valued by our students and is helping to ensure that continuation and completion for these groups is high.

We will continue to ensure that relationships are developed as early as possible with CEES students, to ensure they can build relationships beyond the outreach teams with current students and key staff members at the University who would continue to support them post-enrolment. We will continue to work with charities and other third sector organisations who support students and student influencers to encourage CEES to apply to HE.

We will continue to provide holistic financial interventions designed to support students financially while also providing them with opportunities to develop skills, connect with peers, and create networks.

CEES students will be provided with a wide and diverse range of community groups, safe spaces and networks which allow them to feel part of a rich and vibrant community. Students are then able to fully participate in all aspects of university life and not required to work excessive hours to financially sustain themselves at university.

Professor Cassie Wilson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)

2. Definition

At University of Bath we define a care experienced student to anyone who has been, or is currently, in care. This care may have been provided in many different settings, including living with foster carers; living in a residential children's home; being looked after at home under a supervision order; living with friends or relatives in kinship care.

3. Information for Care Experienced Students

The Admissions Progression Team will help with any queries about applying to Bath. They will consider an applicant's time in care status as part of their contextual admissions process. If an applicant feels that their circumstances have had an impact their academic performance, then may want to submit a mitigating circumstances form for them to consider alongside their UCAS application. Provided they have answered 'yes' to the UCAS question.

Guaranteed offers for Care Leavers

The University of Bath is committed to supporting the successful applications of those who have spent time in care. We understand that time spent in care can have a significant impact in all aspects of life. Accordingly, we appreciate that their educational journey is likely to be disrupted and more challenging, with barriers that students may face making their next steps into higher education. We believe that our applicants should be considered on an individual level and based on their potential. Therefore, we want to ensure that for applicants who have experienced such significant disruption we are offering students an equal chance of entering the university.

We therefore will make a **guaranteed conditional offer** to all applicants who meet our care leaver criteria, have demonstrated an interest in the subject that they have applied for and meet the minimum entry and subject requirements for the course they have applied for. In some cases, there will be an interview as part of the admissions process and a conditional offer will be made to applicants who are successful at interview.

Bursaries for care leavers and estranged students

The University of Bath offers eligible undergraduate students a non-repayable bursary of £1,000 per academic year plus £1,000 to help with start-up costs and a further £1,000 on graduation – a maximum of £7,000 over a 5-year programme including placement.

Student Retention and Success Team (SRS)

The Student Success and Retention Team will be a designated point of contact and support team throughout CEES students time at Bath. The Student Retention and Success Team (SRS) like to engage pre-entry, during a students studies and post graduation. SRS Team meet with students a minimum of twice during an academic year, each Semester, every year including a placement year. We will ask students to book a SRS check in appointment once a Semester. There are two Semesters within the academic year at the University of Bath.

Students can meet with the team in person on the Claverton Down campus or at Virgil Building in the City Centre or online via Microsoft Teams regularly.

This is an opportunity to get to know one another, see how the student is doing, review how the transition into university is going, what support may be required and offer information and advice to help ensure their success at university. We will help remind students of the support available and recommend engagement with other services within the university including the careers team. We will also provide other support, such as:

- advice on the application process
- a meeting or a chat over the phone or on Teams before a student applies to university
- guidance on funding they will be eligible for and how to apply
- coordinating other support services on their behalf
- putting students in touch with networks of other students with similar lived experiences, including students with care experience and students without support from parents (estranged).
- invite students to free social pizza events to meet other students-
- invite students to a free Christmas Day Meal on campus
- invite students to a free sit-down meal with the Vice Chancellor, in a local Bath restaurant to celebrate the end of the academic year

The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
Registered Charity Number: 1180793

www.nnecl.org





- free storage and removals of belongings
- discount on University accommodation over the Summer Period
- a friendly face at the University and someone to talk to.

Student Support

The Student Support Advice Team gives students help and advice on all welfare and wellbeing issues. Advisors are available every day in person during the week 9am-5pm, and including weekends, at the 4 West Roper Centre. The Adviser will help identify the best information and support for students. CEES's student will receive fast track support when required.

Student Support provides all students with support and guidance during their studies, including Therapeutic Services & Mental Health, Disability Support, Student Money Advice and Wellbeing Students supported by the Student Retention and Success Team have priority access to the Wellbeing Service.

Accommodation

Care Leaver, Care Experienced or Estranged students will be guaranteed a place in University accommodation for 365 days a year for the duration of their course this includes the vacation periods (summer/ and festive periods) and short periods between private housing contracts.

Free temporary summer storage and removal service

Free temporary summer storage for their belongings and removal service from one accommodation to another within Bath is available to students that are Care Leavers or Estranged

Discounted university accommodation over summer period

If students would like to move into university accommodation in the summer, there will be a 25% discount on rent over the summer months for students that are Care Leavers and Estranged. Summer accommodation will be available both on campus and off campus in the city centre depending on budget and availability.

Government funding

If a student has Care Leaver or Estranged Student, they are classed as having independent status and will be able to claim the maximum funding from Student Finance. If a student has been financially self-supporting for three years prior to the start of their course and can evidence this, they will also be classed as having independent status and be able to claim the maximum funding from Student Finance.

Independent status also applies to students with care experience, and/or without support from parents (Estranged). If students think this applies to them, they can arrange to meet a member of Student Money Advice Team for further financial support.



CEES students may be eligible for further funding. This includes:

The **Bath Bursary**, a package worth up to £2,750 in Year 1 and up to £2,000 from Year 2 onwards. The Bath Bursary is automatically awarded provided we have received confirmation from the Student Loans Company that their household income is £30,000 or below.

The **Gold Scholarship**, a financial and enrichment package worth up to £5,000 a year

The **Accommodation Bursary**, worth either £1000 or £500 off their first-year accommodation costs.

Budgeting

The Student Money Advice Team will provide information on budgeting, top money saving tips, bank accounts, scams, dealing with debt and other sources of funding

If a student encounters financial difficulties whilst at University they can also apply to the University of Bath Hardship Fund.

If a student is care experienced, estranged, a young adult carer or refugee, the Student Money Advice Team will offer them 121 personalised money advice and budgeting sessions.

Academic Skills

The Skills Centre provides year round study skills classes, including 1:1 tutorials. If a student wants to improve their grades, manage their learning or get some help with an assignment ask to be referred to the Skills Centre for one-to-one support.

All students supported by our team have 1:1 access to a **Study Skills Tutor**, including writing and exam skills, presentations, groupwork, time management and digital skills, maths, statistics, motivation, organisational issues or other areas for development. The idea is to have an opportunity to have a constructive conversation, with some practical guidance from a Tutor.

The Student Retention & Success Team students are encouraged to meet with an Academic Skills Tutor and are referred to the team for 1:1 support. Students can access pre-sessional, academic, mathematics, language and digital skills support and enhancement, both for their studies and future employment directly.

Health services

The University of Bath has an onsite NHS Medical Centre which is available for all students to register with. Based on campus they offer a range of services including GP clinics, prescriptions and urgent appointments. The Student Retention & Success Team



students can request for university staff to contact the University Medical centre on their behalf and arrange appointments.

Careers

Careers offer information, advice and guidance to students, researchers and graduates and work with employers to connect them with our students and recent graduates.

Students will be able to access appointments, opportunities, resources, events and much more. The Student Retention & Success Team students will receive 1:1 specialist support from a dedicated career consultant with a focus on under represented groups of students and those with lived experiences that may require additional support transitioning from education into graduate employment.

Chaplaincy

Offers a place of quiet and support if students need to chat or somewhere to discuss any issues. The Chaplaincy is staffed by friendly Chaplains, is open for regular events each week, and is home to several Faith Societies. People of all faiths or none are welcome. They offer counsel, advice or just a listening ear.

Students' Union Advice and Support Service

Students' Union Advice and Support Service (SU) provides independent, confidential and nonjudgmental information and support to all students, including academic appeals and reviews, considering changing course, academic misconduct or disciplinary issues, housing, health and wellbeing. They also have contact with the Academic Reps, Hall Reps and Peer Mentors.

The **SU** has a job link service that helps students find work during term and vacation time.

E-Mentoring

There are employment opportunities for CEES students to engage in university wide programmes. Details regarding both paid Outreach Ambassador roles and E-mentoring opportunities are available. There are also opportunities to get involved with Campus Events and support open days.

Security

The Security Service on campus can help, whatever the problem. They are available 24 hours a day/ seven days a week/365 days a year. The security team support students with reporting and claiming lost property, reporting an incident, storing their bicycle, using the electronic cycle loan scheme and working closely with the Student Support Team.

We are committed to providing support to CEES students to succeed academically and personally.



“

I WANTED TO EXPRESS MY
GRATITUDE FOR THE INCREDIBLE
IMPACT YOU HAVE HAD ON MY LIFE
FROM THE BEGINNING TO
GRADUATION.

”

Final year care experienced student

Signed:

Prof Cassie Wilson

Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Experience)
University of Bath

Professor Jane White

Vice President, Community & Inclusion
University of Bath

