West Midlands Directory

Higher Education for Looked After /Care Experienced Young People

Compiled by WMCLN regional support
West Midlands Care Leavers Network

If you would like to get in touch with WMCLN please email Baljit Gill, b.k.gill@aston.ac.uk
Welcome

Choosing to study at university is a big decision and choosing where to study can be an even bigger one. With so many different learning environments, courses and places to study this can become an overwhelming and confusing time for any student. However, there is support available. The West Midlands Care Leavers Network consists of representatives from universities in the West Midlands that are committed to supporting young people in care and Care Leavers.

Every member of the network has a range of support on offer and this booklet brings all that information into one place. It gives you guidance on the support available to Care Leavers looking to apply for a place at university, the activities on offer to young people in care and provides you with the invaluable contact details of higher education institutions in the West Midlands.

Whether you are a Care Leaver applying to or considering applying to university, or a professional working with either of these groups, this booklet will ensure that you have all the information necessary to make the most out of the support and opportunities that are available to care experienced young adults making the decision to go on to higher education.

If you are looking for information about a university that is not included in this booklet then you may find it useful to have a look on the Buttle UK website (www.buttletrust.org) or you could contact EMCLASS (East Midlands Care Leavers Activities and Student Support) by emailing EMCLASS@jiscmail.ac.uk or NORTHCLASS (Northern region Care Leavers Activities and Student Support) by emailing Arron Pile at A.Pile@salford.ac.uk. Both of these groups have created booklets similar to this one and would be more than happy to provide you with further information on the universities in their regions.

Most importantly if you are a Care Leaver applying to study at any of the institutions mentioned in this booklet then please make sure you tell us! It will help you access the support and funding that is available to you. Just contact the named person for the institution you are interested in attending or tick ‘yes’ to the question on your UCAS form that asks if you’ve spent any time in care.

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Going to university is a life-changing experience that will increase your job prospects and benefit you far into the future - don’t let money worries put you off!

The student finance system is managed by Student Finance England (SFE), and is designed to enable you to study in higher education without needing to find any money up front. At first, the sums involved might seem intimidating but don’t let it discourage you - there is plenty of information available to help you and most universities will have a dedicated team to assist you in applying for student funding.

For more information about student finance visit www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance or have a look at the finance section of the website for the university you are interested in attending.

Buttle UK

The Buttle UK Quality Mark is awarded to further and higher education providers who demonstrate their commitment to young people in and leaving care.

You will see this quality mark beside the information for some of the institutions in this booklet. This quality mark provides these universities with a framework for validating the quality of support offered to young people in care and Care Leavers.

Not all universities in this booklet hold the quality mark but those that do not still show a commitment to providing support to Care Leavers and offer a range of outreach activities for young people in care.
Aston University

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

- Care Leavers are prioritised in the allocation of places on all outreach activities including master classes, conferences Challenge Days and summer school
- Strong links with Local Authorities in the West Midlands
- On campus events aimed specifically for looked after children and care leavers providing information on Higher Education pathways and support available
- On campus events for LAC teachers and carers
- Bespoke University Visits and services for looked after children and care leavers can be catered for on request

For information about our Outreach provision for looked after children please visit our webpage at www.aston.ac.uk/schliaison or alternatively contact aimhigher@aston.ac.uk

Transitional support for Care Leavers

- A priority award from the National Scholarship Programme
- Pre-entry correspondence with UG applicants who have identified themselves as having spent time in care on their UCAS form
- A pre-entry appointment with the Student Funds Administrator to discuss support needs
- Student Funds Administrator can liaise with the applicant’s Local Authority (with their permission) to aid with the transition to University
- Shared information with Foyer once university place is confirmed
- ‘Welcome to Aston University’ leaflet for Care Leavers
- Prioritisation of expenditure needs from the Access to Learning Fund
- Access to Learning Fund summer vacation needs also prioritised
- 52 week accommodation for duration of degree, if required
- Personalised signposting to the comprehensive range of student support available, e.g. Pre-entry e-mentoring, Transition Mentoring, Study Skills development, etc
- Ongoing point of contact throughout time at University

University of Birmingham

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

- Priority allocation of places on all our school and college outreach events, including subject enrichment classes, individually organised visits on request and residential summer schools provided free of charge
- Information sessions held specifically for foster carers

Transitional support for Care Leavers

- A priority award of £4,750 to fund accommodation if the student chooses to live in university owned halls or, if they choose to live elsewhere, a £3,000 cash bursary or tuition fee waiver
- Single point of contact for pre-entry support and ongoing point of contact throughout time at University
- Priority in choice of University accommodation and help with accessing 52 week accommodation throughout the duration of the course
- Pre-entry correspondence with undergraduate applicants who have identified themselves as having spent time in care on their UCAS form
- Prioritised applications to the Access to Learning Fund
- Offer of an initial guidance session with a designated counsellor
- Invitation to join our Access to Birmingham induction day before the start of the main University Welcome Week

www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/money/care-leavers

www.birmingham.ac.uk/careleavers
**Birmingham City University**

**Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children**

• The Outreach team is happy to engage with Looked After Children within their remit of raising aspirations and promoting the University to year groups 9 - 13 through their work with regional schools and colleges. This work includes campus visits, subject masterclasses, workshops on coming to university and one-to-one surgeries and personal statement workshops

• Schools and colleges are more than welcome to ensure that Looked After Children are prioritised when selecting young people to attend activities. Birmingham City University is also part of the Aimhigher mentoring project whereby they provide undergraduate student mentors to work closely with young people in schools. Again, schools may wish to select a young person in this position to receive one-to-one mentoring

**Transitional support for Care Leavers**

• A Student Wellbeing Advisor can liaise with the applicant’s Local Authority (with their permission) to aid with the transition to University

• Care Leavers are signposted to the Helpzone and Finance Advisers for financial assistance if required

• Support with arranging 365 day accommodation in student Halls of Residence is offered if required

• Personalised signposting to the comprehensive range of student support available

• An ongoing point of contact is available throughout your time at university, and can offer confidential, one-to-one advice and support with any difficulties you may be experiencing at university

**Coventry University**

**Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children**

• Strong links with Local Authorities in Coventry and Warwickshire

• Excellent links with the After Care Project Team in Coventry

• Trained Progression Ambassadors to support Care Leavers in schools, colleges and at the After Care Project Centre to help them access Higher Education

• University visits to local schools and colleges

• Easy access to Open Days, summer schools and taster sessions for Care Leavers

• Collaborative partnership with Warwick University providing information sessions specifically for Care Leavers

• University Careers Advisers support local schools and colleges with information on how to access Higher Education

• Flexible admission process in line with our Access Agreement

**Transitional support for Care Leavers**

• Pre-entry support for Care Leavers who make themselves known through the UCAS system

• Invitation to personalised Open Day tailored to the Care Leaver's needs

• Specific pre-induction summer school for Care Leavers to make them aware of the personal and financial support available to them and how to access it

• £500 in cash per year plus £500 purchasing credits per year for Care Leavers who meet the criteria

• 52 week guaranteed accommodation for the duration of the course in University halls of residence with access to pastoral care from Student Wardens and Halls Officers

• Designated Welfare Officer to act as key contact for the duration of the course

• Signposting to the comprehensive range of student support available

• Individual peer mentor support available through the transition period and throughout the first year of their course

• Easy access to an experienced Student Funding Officer to advise on funding available, assistance with funding applications and support throughout the course
Keele University

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

• Prioritised places on Summer Schools, residential visits and other events such as subject taster days, master classes and university experience days

• We offer workshops and seminars for foster carers and IAG advisors to raise awareness of HE: the benefits to young people, HE & Finance, and information about the support available in HE

• Care Leavers are included as a target group in the Access to Keele (AK2) Scheme. This supports the development of the skills required for success at university and also helps participants have realistic expectations of what HE can offer them. It includes e-mentoring, university visits, study skills workshops and academic taster sessions. For further information please go to www.keele.ac.uk/a2k

For further information on the range of outreach activities available for care leavers please visit www.keele.ac.uk/outreach

Transitional support for Care Leavers

• The Keele e-mentoring scheme for pre-arrival students

• Pre arrival visit to the campus to see accommodation and teaching departments by arrangement with the Care Leaver contact

• A guaranteed place in University Halls of Residence for 52 weeks a year

• Automatic eligibility for National Scholarship Award. The first year award comprises a £2,000 tuition fee reduction and a £1,000 cash bursary and, in subsequent years, automatic eligibility for the Keele University Bursary comprising of £1,000 a year cash

• Peer mentoring support pre-arrival and through the course

• Named contact in the Student Support and Experience Team available to offer personalised advice and signposting to the range of support available at Keele University

Newman University College

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

• Open days - a chance to come and have a chat about the opportunities available to you

• Applicant Visit Days - a chance for applicants to meet teaching staff, fellow students and get familiar with the campus

Transitional support for Care Leavers

• Priority acceptance on the National Scholarship Programme

• Confidential pre-entry advice and ongoing support from a designated member of staff

• 365 days accommodation

• Priority acceptance on HEADstart, Newman's pre-entry course for combined, joint and single honours undergraduates

• Advocacy service

• Linking students up with transition mentors
Staffordshire University

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

• Contact made by University prior to course start date to all applicants who declare Care Leavers status on UCAS form
• Targeted information guide for Care Leavers, distributed to Local Authorities, schools and colleges
• Invitation to attend Open Days
• Strong links with Staffordshire Virtual Schools
• Events specifically targeted at young people from care in local schools and colleges, including presentations, workshops and campus visits
• Information guides targeted specifically at Local Authorities, Foster Parents and Care services, identifying accommodation arrangements, financial and practical support available for Care Leavers

Transitional support for Care Leavers

• Pre-entry contact from the University’s Named Contact for Care Leavers
• Opportunity to arrange to meet with the Named Contact following application by individual arrangement, including a visit to the campus and support services
• A dedicated Transition Officer is available to provide advice about support to help you get settled into University
• Supported access to the University’s Student Advice Centre for financial advice
• Support with arranging 365 day accommodation for the duration of the course of study
• Reduced accommodation deposit available for Care Leavers
• Bedding pack provided in halls of residence at request
• Supported access to meet with a Student Ambassador during Welcome Week for campus orientation
• Opportunity to become involved in the University’s Care Leaver support team as an ambassador, to develop additional support and facilities for Care Leaver students
• Prioritised access to the Access to Learning Fund
• The Named Contact for Care Leavers acts as a point of contact for Care Leavers, Local Authorities and other Aftercare services from the point of application, to the completion of your studies, and is available to answer any questions that you or your team might have about studying at Staffordshire University

Contact:
Elsa Heffernan
Specialist Student Advisor
T: 01782 294517
E: e.c.heffernan@staffs.ac.uk

University of Warwick

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

• On campus Taster Days for years 5 & 6 young people from Coventry and Warwickshire
• Places available for LAC from Coventry and Warwickshire at our year 10 and year 12 Summer Schools
• Working with LACES Coventry to provide programmes targeted at STEM subjects
• Targeted work with Coventry Aftercare Project in partnership with Coventry University, including mentoring and on campus events

Transitional support for Care Leavers

• Students whose income is less than £25,000 per year will receive a Warwick National Scholarship in the form of a University accommodation discount or tuition fee waiver of up to £2,000 and a Warwick Bursary of £1,000 to help with study related costs. Full details of Warwick’s Undergraduate National Scholarship and Bursary programme for 2014/15 entry can be found at www.warwick.ac.uk/warwickusb
• Care Leavers or residents in a Foyer or students in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Income Support under the age of 19 whilst in continuous full-time education will receive a £1,000 Bursary for each year of their study, including Postgraduate study. Students are also offered a one to one appointment with a Student Funding Adviser to ensure they are receiving their full funding entitlement and have the opportunity to continue with this support throughout their University career
• The Access to Learning Fund provides additional financial assistance for students experiencing financial difficulties. Students eligible for the Warwick Foyer Bursary who need further financial support will be considered a priority for funding from the Access to Learning Fund
• Applicants contacted at point of application and told of services and support that are available to them
• A single named contact from application through to graduation
• Support booklet signposting all student support services
• Access to student support services including Personal Tutors, University Senior Tutors, Residential Life Team, and a Counselling Service

Contact:
Claire Edden
T: 024 7652 3648
F: 024 7652 4649
E: c.l.g.edden@warwick.ac.uk
University of Wolverhampton

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

- As requested, specialist workshops and other events
- Priority for intensive outreach activities like summer schools or mentoring programmes
- Links with Local Authorities in Black Country, Dudley, Telford and Wolverhampton
- Residentials to promote independent living and what it’s like to live at university
- University visits for LAC or care-leavers to raise aspirations and show that university is an option for their future
- Events for Foster Carers to enhance their knowledge about university so they are able to discuss it as an option with the LAC in their care
- A step up module is available for LAC and care-leavers so they are able to see what university is like before they apply, to show that it is accessible for them

Transitional support for Care Leavers

- Pre-entry correspondence with UG applicants who have identified themselves as having spent time in care on their UCAS form
- Pre-entry advice regarding funding including: support with completing applications for funding; liaison with applicant’s local authority (if requested and with applicant’s permission)
- A non-repayable bursary of up to £500 each year (£750 in final year)
- Personalised signposting to the comprehensive range of student support available
- 52 week accommodation for our students
- Mentoring Scheme and access to online mentoring support

University of Worcester

Outreach for Care Leavers and Looked After Children

- Bespoke events including taster days, carer events and activities
- Outreach with young people in care and leaving the care system with specialist organisations including: financial advice sessions, subject specific master classes and motivational activities
- Mentoring and coaching, including current students who have experience of care
- Impartial Pre-entry information advice and guidance
- Priority for access to the whole range of Discover Worcester events, summer schools and specialist programmes

Transitional support for Care Leavers

- £3,000 fee waiver for all students in receipt of full state support
- Support with accessing 52 week university accommodation where required
- Trained support contact to assist with signposting to university support services
- Peer mentor support, earn as you learn scheme with significant opportunities for students to undertake paid work on university programmes and activities, assisted support with accessing vacation work

Contact:
Kirsty Jones
Head of The Gateway
T: 01902 321 834
E: k.jones@wlv.ac.uk
OR Contact:
Lydia Dams
Student Recruitment Officer
T: 01902 32 2007
E: Lydia.dams@wlv.ac.uk

www.wlv.ac.uk/care
www.worc.ac.uk/studentservices
Aimhigher

Aimhigher is an exciting initiative involving four of the West Midland’s leading higher education institutions:

- Aston University
- Birmingham City University
- University College Birmingham
- The University of Birmingham

Aimhigher gives young people from less advantaged backgrounds a chance to become motivated and confident about their learning and career progression, explore the world of higher education and what it might mean for them and make informed decisions. Schools, colleges and Local Authorities contribute funding to support our work, and Looked After Children and Care Leavers are an important group for us.

Outreach

We offer a range of activities for 14 to 19 Looked After Children and Care Leavers, including:

- Undergraduate mentoring, including face-to-face individual and group work, and e-mentoring using the BrightLinks system
- A range of residential and non-residential UniFest summer schools, including pre-event parent / carer events across all four Aimhigher universities
- Healthcare Careers Activities and Work Experience Placements
- University visits and masterclasses
- Higher education advice workshops
- Bespoke activities and events

www.aimhigherwm.ac.uk
Care Leavers Bursary / Higher Education Bursary

If you decide to start a full time degree at university you may be entitled to apply for a one-off £2,000 Care Leavers Bursary from your Local Authority. This bursary can be accessed via your social worker.

Some Local Authorities pay a lump sum, some split the payment and some cover your rent payments. If you are from the West Midlands area the contact details for the Local Authorities are below.

More information on this bursary can either be accessed through using the contact details on the page for the university you are attending/applying to or by speaking with your social worker.

Birmingham
16+ Careleavers Service
Eve Brook House
15 Acorn Grove, Ladywood
Birmingham B1 2PL
Tel: 0121 464 1229
Email: SCHAaftercare@birmingham.gov.uk

Coventry
Coventry Aftercare Project
The Rocklands Centre
138 Foleshill Road
Coventry
CV1 4JJ
Tel: 024 7625 7733

Dudley
The 16 Plus (looked after & after care) Team
Dudley Council Plus
259 Castle Street
Dudley, West Midlands
DY1 1LQ
Tel: 0300 555 2345

Sandwell
Leaving Care Service
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
PO Box 2374
Oldbury B69 3DE
Tel: 0845 351 0131

Solihull
Education and Children Services
16+ Team
Jensen House, Bosworth Centre
Auckland Drive
Smith’s Wood B36 0DD
Tel: 0121 788 4200

Walsall
Looked After Children Service / Transition and Leaving Care
8th Floor
Townend House
Townend Square
Walsall
WS1 1NS
Tel: 01922 650555

Wolverhampton
Looked After Children’s Service
Beldray Building
Mount Pleasant
Bilston
Wolverhampton, WV14 7PR
Tel: 01902 553001
Contact:
Baljit Gill
Head of Learner Enhancement
T: 0121 204 4778
E: b.k.gill@aston.ac.uk