

# Coronavirus Briefing note

Office for  
Students

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## Students without family support

Students who are not supported by their parents or wider family can face challenges during their time at university or college. The coronavirus pandemic may exacerbate these challenges, making these students particularly vulnerable. They may have accommodation difficulties that students who live in or are able to return to their family homes do not. They may be unsure about the financial support available to them during this period. Students who have been looked after by grandparents or other elderly relatives may find themselves taking on caring responsibilities. As their flatmates depart and their university or college moves to remote teaching and support, they may feel isolated and anxious. They may be unsure about how they will cope if they need to

Working with universities, colleges and other stakeholders, the Office for Students (OfS) is producing a series of briefing notes on the steps universities and colleges are taking to support their students during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The notes do not represent regulatory advice or guidance, stipulate particular approaches, or endorse the actions of specific institutions. Their focus is on sharing ideas and responses, and signposting to further information. They reflect current information as at date of publication in a rapidly evolving situation.

self-isolate or become ill. Prospective students without family support who intend to start their studies in 2020-21 may find it more difficult to get the information and guidance they need, following school closures.

### Terms used in this note

**Care leaver:** A young person aged 16-25 years old who has been 'looked after' for at least 13 weeks by a local authority at some point since they were 14 years old, and were in care on or after their sixteenth birthday.

**Unaccompanied asylum seeking children:** Children under 18, who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. An increasing number of those at care leaving age are likely to be unaccompanied asylum seeking children and so may be facing both care and immigration issues.<sup>1</sup>

**Care experienced:** A broad definition which encompasses all those who have spent time in care during childhood. Many will not be classed as care leavers because they left care (through, for example, adoption or returning to their family) before their sixteenth birthday.

**Estranged students:** Students who are 'estranged' have no communicative relationship with either of their living biological parents and often their wider family networks as well.<sup>2</sup> These students do not have the same legal protections as care leavers; local authorities have no statutory responsibility for their welfare.

The Office for Students is the independent regulator of higher education in England. We aim to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. We regulate to promote quality, choice, competition and value for money in higher education, with a particular remit to ensure access, success and progression for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups of students.

This briefing note looks at the practical steps universities and colleges are taking to help students without family support during the pandemic and beyond. It focuses on concerns that students without family support have themselves raised, and signposts to sources of advice and information. It also looks at issues currently facing prospective students in this group.

Throughout the note we refer to 'students without family support' as a way of describing a broad and diverse group of students, including care leavers, care experienced students, estranged students, refugees and asylum seekers. This term does not accurately reflect the circumstances of every student in this group. But it tries to capture, however imperfectly, the unique and multiple challenges many of these students face.

## **Students without family support in higher education**

### **Students without family support are poorly represented in higher education:**

- Only a small proportion of care leavers go onto higher education. In 2019, only 6 per cent of care leavers aged 19 to 21 were in higher education.<sup>3</sup> If we also include higher education students attending further education colleges (using 2017-18 data from the national pupil database), the figure rises to 12 per cent – but this is still substantially lower than the 42 per cent participation rate of all other pupils.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2016-17, there were just over 7,000 England-domiciled care experienced students studying in UK higher education institutions, less than 1 per cent of the student body.<sup>5</sup> This means that most universities and colleges will have only a small number of care experienced or estranged students. But they are a group with complex and disparate needs. For example, care leavers studying in 2016-17 were more likely to be disabled, not to be UK nationals, and to study part-time than the student body in general.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the very low levels of participation in higher education by students without family support, universities and colleges have tended to focus on improving their access to higher education.<sup>7</sup> This is understandable, but it may mean that not all will have tailored support in place for current students without family support. Here, retention is an issue: care leavers, for example, are more likely to withdraw from their degree than their peers.<sup>8</sup>

Not all students with experience of care have the same legal protections. In England the official care leaving age is 18, although young people can leave care from the age of 16, at which point they are designated 'care leavers'. While both care leavers and care experienced students will have been 'looked after' as children, only care leavers have a statutory right to local authority support. Care

experienced children – if they are not care leavers due to family reunification, adoption or other routes out of care – do not receive this support.

The legal definition of care leavers, therefore, often fails to capture all those with experience of care who might need support, especially as many enter higher education later on in life.

The OfS has encouraged providers to ensure care experienced and estranged students are eligible for support in the same way as care leavers.<sup>9</sup>

## **The impact of the coronavirus pandemic**

The pandemic has exacerbated many of the difficulties students without family support are facing, as well as throwing up new ones. A small UK-wide survey of 251 care experienced and estranged students was conducted during the first week of the national lockdown (23-27 March 2020).<sup>10</sup> While this survey cannot tell us if students without family support are more or less concerned about the impact of this pandemic than students generally, and was conducted before the government's announcement of support for higher education students and institutions, it does highlight this group's most pressing concerns.<sup>11</sup>

### **Accommodation and essential supplies**

41 per cent of respondents to the survey said they felt informed about how coronavirus affected their accommodation. Because term-time accommodation is likely to be care experienced and estranged students' year-round address, they may be made homeless if they have to leave their accommodation during the pandemic.

The government has stressed that students should not be evicted from halls of residence and other accommodation owned by universities and colleges. Universities should also work with local private halls and landlords to ensure they do not evict students (unless they offer alternative accommodation).<sup>12</sup>

A more specific worry for those without family support is their ability to get food and other essentials during the pandemic. Half of the respondents to the survey expressed concern about this. The government has asked providers to consider what practical support may be needed for students who remain on campus, to ensure they can access sufficient food and medical and cleaning supplies during this period.<sup>13</sup> Many students' unions have been delivering food packages to vulnerable students who are self-isolating. Other universities are providing food vouchers. Universities and colleges are also ensuring that students are informed about hardship funds.

### **Finances**

Financial concerns are also high on the list of these students' worries. 62 per cent of students in the survey said that the ability to earn money was one of their main concerns.<sup>14</sup> The closure of shops, restaurants and other businesses during the lockdown will for some students have impacted the

income they receive from the part-time work they undertake to supplement their maintenance loans. Most students in full-time higher education will not be eligible for universal credit or housing benefit.<sup>15</sup> Students with a part-time employment contract can speak to their employer about the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been set up to help pay staff wages and keep people in employment.<sup>16</sup>

Financial support systems vary widely. Care leavers may be eligible for help from their local authority. Other groups – such as estranged students, care experienced students and students who are refugees – may not. Some universities and colleges have written to students without family support with information about how to apply for hardship funds.

The OfS has made clear that higher education providers should honour the financial commitments they have made to current and future students through their access and participation plans. We are allowing universities and colleges some flexibility in how they use funds they had committed to activity that cannot currently happen due to the closure of schools. This includes using these funds to address the hardship and mental health needs of students the government has identified to be vulnerable, which includes care experienced and estranged students. This means that universities will not only be continuing to provide financial support they had promised to students without family support, they may be supplementing this for those experiencing particular hardship. This aid could be an important source of support for students during this uncertain period.<sup>17</sup>

## Wellbeing

For many students without family support, their university or college is their support network and home. The physical distancing measures imposed during lockdown may disrupt these networks, leading to feelings of isolation in a group which is already vulnerable. Over half of the students responding to the survey said that they were particularly worried about feeling lonely and isolated.<sup>18</sup>

Many universities and colleges have put in place measures to make students without family support less lonely. This has included sending Easter cards and Easter eggs, promoting a buddy system, and ensuring they can talk to wellbeing support staff over the phone or video messaging.

Many students without family support experience trauma during childhood, with implications for their mental health.<sup>19</sup> This could be exacerbated by the anticipated consequences of physical distancing<sup>20</sup> and it means that their mental health will be a key consideration for universities, colleges and local authorities. The OfS has published a briefing note on mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic with examples and resources that may help.<sup>21</sup>

## Teaching and learning

62 per cent of the respondents to the care experienced and estranged students' survey said they were worried about their ability to complete their courses. Estranged students, who may be 'sofa surfing' or otherwise without secure housing, may not have the space to do their course work or sit exams. Many universities and colleges

### University of Sunderland: Financial support

The University of Sunderland has added to its hardship fund and is prioritising applications from care experienced and estranged students. Personalised support (including financial support) has been offered to care experienced and estranged students, and the university will continue to be in touch with them over the coming weeks. It has increased its 'We Care' scholarship (for care experienced and estranged students) from £1,500 to £2,000. This means each scholarship student will receive an additional payment of £500 in July 2020, when they have said they will most need the money. The university is also sending supermarket vouchers to students experiencing financial hardship.

Some students who do not have their own laptops are being loaned university laptops (which are being couriered directly to them) for their academic studies. Final year students can also use them to apply for jobs.

### University of York: Wellbeing support

The university is offering weekly online drop-in sessions for care leavers and estranged students who may be feeling lonely. These are well attended and have received positive feedback from the students. Students can also make one-to-one appointments to discuss wellbeing and other issues they may be facing. The university is working to ensure that the relevant services and departments (such as catering and student finance) are meeting students' needs during the pandemic. It has also:

- established an email and Facebook group to encourage care leavers and estranged students to socialise and share their experiences of the current situation
- set up a weekly 'check-in' email, and a monthly newsletter with tips and opportunities
- sent out Easter gifts.

### Student perspectives

'I have personally received a huge amount of support and contact from [the provider] who has kept in regular contact via email, telephone and Facebook. It has really been helpful, not only to my positive mental health but they have also promoted healthy physical exercise via fun informal exercise classes via conference call.' – *estranged student*

'I am self-isolating in halls, and though it can be lonely I am coping well. Continuing study has been tough at times as my sleep schedule and anxiety isn't the best, but the tutors are supportive and I'm adjusting my routine to work better with working from home.' – *estranged student*

have extended deadlines and relaxed rules on extenuating circumstances during the pandemic with the aim of helping all students, including those without family support.

Students without family support might not have the necessary IT equipment and support to access remote learning and teaching. Some students do not have access to the software they may need to complete their coursework and buying licences could be prohibitively expensive. Universities and colleges could consider offering access through their own software licences. For some eligible care leavers, local authorities are able to provide internet access and IT equipment.<sup>22</sup> For those who are not eligible, providers can divert student premium or

capital funding towards ensuring students without family support have the right equipment.<sup>23</sup> Working closely with local authorities could ensure that gaps in provision are addressed.

The OfS has published guidance on our approach to the regulation of quality and standards during the coronavirus pandemic, including support for students without family support.<sup>24</sup>

### Graduating students

With many businesses furloughed due to the pandemic, it is likely to be much harder for graduates to secure employment to support themselves. Many universities and colleges have moved their careers services online and their advice is increasingly targeted to the needs of specific groups of students and graduates. Others are also offering tailored services for students without family support. For example, final year students at Kingston University who are care leavers or estranged are eligible for a graduation bursary to help with transition, and they are offered intensive work with an advisor to support them into graduate-level employment.

Uncertainty around graduation dates might impact students' ability to claim benefits, although this can be mitigated if providers are able to confirm a notional date on which graduation would otherwise have occurred. While this is a general problem for students, it is likely to impact on those without family support more, especially those such as asylum seekers, who might not be eligible for some benefits. Financial concerns are, therefore, particularly pressing for graduates without family

### University of Wolverhampton: Co-ordinated academic support

The university has been communicating with local authorities on behalf of care leavers receiving local authority support (with the consent of the student) to ensure that support is joined up.

Teaching and assessment have now moved online. The university has contacted all its care leaver and estranged students to offer advice and support with their studies, and to signpost them to additional academic support if they feel they are struggling.

Students without IT equipment or an internet connection have been offered equipment loans and a wireless dongle. Care leavers and estranged students have been prioritised to receive this support.

Students have access to a wealth of online support, including the Skills for Learning Canvas course, which provides resources and virtual workshops on academic study skills. Students are also being offered online chat services to help with any queries.

### De Montfort University: Support for graduating students

The university is offering a range of support for care leavers and estranged students:

- £1,000 for students who are graduating to help with the costs of moving on from university (for example, accommodation expenses and travel to job interviews)
- virtual workshops and one-to-one meetings on postgraduate study options, finding somewhere to live, volunteering, obtaining careers advice, applying for benefits, etc.
- a £1,000 bursary for students progressing to postgraduate study at the university.

The university also offers a Graduate Champions scheme, open to all students, which provides paid work to graduates not in work several months after graduating.

support. Some universities already offer, or are now offering, a bursary on graduation for care experienced and estranged students.

## Information and guidance for applicants

It is particularly important in the current circumstances that students without family support can continue to access advice and guidance to help them to make informed decisions about their higher education options. Discover Uni and UCAS are both publishing regular advice and updates for applicants during the pandemic.<sup>25</sup>

The OfS is working with Uni Connect partnerships to help support more vulnerable groups of prospective university or college applicants, including those without family support. We have asked partnerships to look at supporting broader groups of underrepresented students, not just those currently in their target schools and wards. In particular, we have asked them to focus on the information, advice and guidance needs of students applying to higher education in the current admissions cycle. This will help ensure that any disadvantages these students have experienced elsewhere in their lives are not compounded by the choices they need to make during the pandemic about the next stage of their education.

Moving to remote working may mean there are safeguarding issues to work through. There is also a need to ensure that social workers, foster carers and the participants themselves are kept

## Greater Manchester Higher Uni Connect Partnership: Information and guidance

Greater Manchester Higher is one of 29 Uni Connect partnerships funded by the OfS to provide higher education outreach to young people across England. During the pandemic, the partnership is diversifying its offer to ensure that care experienced and estranged young people can access wider information and guidance as well as more specialised provision. It has consulted with local authorities and drawn on the experience of staff who are care leavers to identify what is most needed at this time.

The partnership is continuing to provide impartial advice on its website, which has been restructured to highlight the support available for care experienced and estranged students at universities and colleges in the local area.<sup>26</sup> A lot of existing outreach provision has been moved online. The partnership is aiming to help as many care experienced students and their supporters as possible throughout this time and is liaising with local authorities and third sector bodies to signpost them to the higher education and outreach opportunities available to young care experienced people.

## University of Salford: Supporting prospective students

The University of Salford has contacted care experienced and estranged applicants for 2020-21 entry to invite them to a bespoke online open day, including a lunch delivery, which is tailored to their needs and interests.

The visit day is publicised to local authorities – the university offers the option of group sessions for young people in the care of the local authority and their key workers. There are also pre-application sessions for colleges and schools.

The day includes a presentation on higher education, a virtual campus tour, a presentation by the university's care experienced/estranged teams, Q&A sessions with student ambassadors, and a meeting with an academic from the course the student has applied to. Care leaver ambassadors and care leaver members of staff are on hand to answer any questions.

up to date with the move online. The Department for Education has announced a scheme for local authorities to provide digital devices, such as laptops and tablets, and internet access to eligible care leavers, young people with a social worker, and disadvantaged year 10 pupils who do not currently have access to them.<sup>27</sup>

## Transition to higher education

Universities and colleges are beginning work to ensure a smooth transition into higher education for students without family support starting their studies in autumn 2020. Some providers are offering financial advice remotely and allowing students without family support to move into halls early. Some universities and colleges have moved their pre-entry support online including virtual visit days and online university skills sessions before the start of term. The Student Loans Company is encouraging prospective students to apply early to avoid any delay in payment.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

This briefing sets out some of the ways universities and colleges are working to assist students without family support during the pandemic. They have put in place a range of measures for these students to help them manage feelings of isolation, access financial help, and remain in accommodation. For prospective students, transition support has moved online, and information and guidance has been adapted in light of the pandemic. For students about to graduate, there is help in the form of bursaries and employment advice.

These issues are not exhaustive – as the pandemic continues to play out over the coming months, it is likely that other challenges and issues will emerge. The OfS is working with sector bodies and charities to identify and evaluate emerging practice, and universities, colleges and students' unions are also sharing practice, resources and evaluations within their own networks. This will help us all to develop a better understanding of the impact of interventions and actions during this period.

## Students without family support: information and resources

### OfS publications related to coronavirus

Provider guide to coronavirus – support for vulnerable students: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/)

Student guide to coronavirus: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-guide-to-coronavirus/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/for-students/student-guide-to-coronavirus/)

OfS coronavirus briefing note – student accommodation: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-student-accommodation/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-student-accommodation/)

OfS coronavirus briefing note – supporting student mental health: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-supporting-student-mental-health/>

Guidance for Uni Connect partnerships during the pandemic: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/uni-connect-programme-an-update-from-the-office-for-students/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/uni-connect-programme-an-update-from-the-office-for-students/)

### National Network for the Education of Care Leavers

The National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) works with colleges and universities in the UK to ensure that access and support to higher education for care experienced people is exemplary and consistent. Their website will be updated with examples of good practice. <https://www.nnecl.org/>

### Government guidance with particular relevance to this briefing note

Guidance for local authorities, academy trusts and schools on how to get internet access, digital devices and support to provide remote education during the coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

### Help for prospective students

The **Discover Uni** website, which provides information and guidance on higher education for prospective students, is publishing regular updates about the impact of the pandemic for 2020-21 university and college applicants: <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/corona-covid-19-information/>

**UCAS** has updated its website with advice for applicants during the pandemic: <https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus-updates-hub>

Prospective university or college students and their guardians can find their nearest **Uni Connect** partnership to help them access advice and guidance at: <https://www.ofsuniconnect.org/>

### Support for people without family support and other vulnerable people

The **Rees Foundation** supports care leavers and care experienced people and communities across the UK: <http://www.reesfoundation.org/>

The **Become** charity provides advice, support and opportunities for care experienced children and young people. It has a coronavirus advice page for care experienced young people: <https://becomecharity.org.uk/coronavirus>

The **Propel** website (run by Become) provides care leavers with information on the support available to them from colleges and universities offering higher education courses across the UK. It contains named contacts for care experienced students: <http://propel.org.uk/UK/>

The **Unite Foundation** offers scholarships to some care leavers and estranged students: <https://www.unitefoundation.co.uk/get-a-scholarship/>

**Buttle UK** provides grants and support to vulnerable young people: <https://www.buttleuk.org/>

**Stand Alone** supports adults who are estranged from their family or a key family member. Named contacts for estranged students are on their website: <https://www.standalone.org.uk/contact/>

**Care Leaver Covenant** is a promise made by private, public or voluntary organisations to provide support for care leavers aged 16-25 to help them to live independently. They have compiled a directory of organisations supporting care leavers during the pandemic: <https://mycovenant.org.uk/covid-19/>

The **This Is Us podcast** is by and for care leavers and estranged students, and will be hosting a 'live' chat at 8pm weeknights throughout the pandemic: [www.instagram.com/thisisuspodcast](http://www.instagram.com/thisisuspodcast)

**Childline** provides advice and emotional support for children and young people under the age of 19. Call 0800 1111 or chat online: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

**Young Minds** provides information and support on mental health for children and young people, including a free 24-hour messenger service for a young person experiencing a mental health crisis: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

**The Mix** is a support service for young people (up to age 25) offering advice and support on a range of issues including mental health, finance, homelessness, employment and drugs dependency. A telephone counselling service offers short-term help with mental health and emotional wellbeing. Call 0808 808 4994 or chat online: <https://www.themix.org.uk/>

**Kooth** provides online counselling and emotional support for children and young people aged 11-25: <https://www.kooth.com/>

People of all ages can call the **Samaritans** on 116 123, to talk about anything that's worrying them, 24 hours a day: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

**Shout** is a 24/7 UK crisis text service for people who feel they need immediate support: <https://www.giveusashout.org/>

**Mind** provides information on mental health issues, advocacy, medication and treatments, as well as details of local help and support services: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>. Call the Infoline on 0300 123 3393.

**Hopeline UK:** <https://papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk/>. A specialist telephone service offering support, practical advice and information to children, teenagers and young people up to the age of 35, who are worried about how they're feeling. Call 0800 068 4141 or text 07786 209697.

**Breathe mediation app:** <https://breathe.com>. Children in care and care leavers can get a free annual subscription by emailing [hello@imohub.org.uk](mailto:hello@imohub.org.uk)

**Youth Access** is a resource for finding local counselling, advice and information services: <https://www.youthaccess.org.uk/services/find-your-local-service>



## Financial advice

**Government guidance** on students and universal credit is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students>. Information about universal credit and coronavirus is at <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

**Turn 2 us** has information and advice about money and benefits, including during coronavirus: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/Benefits-and-Coronavirus-new>

The **National Debt Line** gives money and debt advice, including advice and support on coronavirus-related issues. Call 0808 808 4000 or chat online: <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/EW/factsheets/Pages/coronavirus-advice-and-support/help-and-advice.aspx>

## Support for parents and carers

**Grandparents Plus** is a national kinship care charity: <https://www.grandparentsplus.org.uk/>. Call the advice line on 0300 123 7015 or email [advice@grandparentsplus.org.uk](mailto:advice@grandparentsplus.org.uk)

**Family Rights Group** provides confidential advice for parents and family members who are involved with or need children's social care services: <https://www.frg.org.uk/>. Call 0808 801 0366.

## Making complaints

Students with concerns about how their provider is supporting them during the current situation should first raise these with their university or college. Students can escalate complaints with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) once they have exhausted the complaints procedure at their higher education provider. <https://www.oiahe.org.uk>

We thank those universities, colleges and partnerships that provided case studies and interventions described in this briefing note. We would also like to thank Become, Stand Alone, the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL), the Unite Foundation and Spectra, whose survey results we have drawn on throughout this note. We are grateful to NNECL for their insights and ideas and for sharing case studies.

The case studies and interventions described in this note have been developed at pace and have not yet been evaluated for effectiveness. They are offered in the spirit of sharing practice that others may find useful and applicable to their own contexts.

# Notes

<sup>1</sup> See 'Main report: children looked after in England', <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>, p8

<sup>2</sup> This could be because of abuse, forced marriage, and/or family rejection because of belonging to the LGBT community. Unite Foundation and Stand Alone Charity, 'New starts: The challenges of Higher Education without the support of a family network' (2015), <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/unite-foundation-and-stand-alone?topic=guides-and-toolkits>, p5

<sup>3</sup> See 'Main report: children looked after in England', p13

<sup>4</sup> 'Widening Participation in Higher Education, England, 2017/18 age cohort - Official Statistics' (2019), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/widening-participation-in-higher-education-2019>, p11

<sup>5</sup> Neil Harrison, 'Patterns of participation in higher education for care-experienced students in England: why has there not been more progress?', Studies in Higher Education (2019), p8

<sup>6</sup> Harrison, 'Patterns of participation', p9

<sup>7</sup> For example, of the access and participation plans universities submitted to the OfS in 2018-19, out of 49 targets which related to care leavers, 33 related to access. This reflects the early stage of work with this group in many universities and colleges. OfS, 'Transforming opportunity in higher education' (2020), [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/transforming-opportunity-in-higher-education/), p36

<sup>8</sup> See Neil Harrison, 'Moving on up' (2017), [www.nnecl.org/resources/moving-on-up-report?topic=guides-and-toolkits](http://www.nnecl.org/resources/moving-on-up-report?topic=guides-and-toolkits), p28; Unite Foundation, 'Positive impact?' (2020), <https://www.unitefoundation.co.uk/unite-foundation-parliamentary-reception-celebrates-step-forward-in-understanding-and-responding-to-the-needs-of-care-leaver-and-estranged-students/>

<sup>9</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/care-leavers-and-looked-after-children/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/care-leavers-and-looked-after-children/)

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/supporting-care-experienced-and-?topic=films>

<sup>11</sup> This survey did not include students who were not care experienced or estranged. Therefore, we do not know how the responses discussed compare to the general student population.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of student accommodation issues during the pandemic, see [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-student-accommodation/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-student-accommodation/). Much of this discussion is applicable to students without family support.

<sup>13</sup> See [https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1eb027c9-9e36-4841-849b-57b5ed334cbb/minister-donelan-letter\\_260320.pdf](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1eb027c9-9e36-4841-849b-57b5ed334cbb/minister-donelan-letter_260320.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/supporting-care-experienced-and-?topic=films>, p1

<sup>15</sup> There are exceptions. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students>

<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-could-be-covered-by-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

<sup>17</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/)

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.nnecl.org/resources/supporting-care-experienced-and-?topic=films>

<sup>19</sup> See 'Moving on up', pp69-70; Harrison, 'Patterns of participation', pp10-11

<sup>20</sup> See [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366\(20\)30168-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(20)30168-1/fulltext)

<sup>21</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-supporting-student-mental-health/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/coronavirus-briefing-note-supporting-student-mental-health/)

<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

<sup>23</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/coronavirus/provider-guide-to-coronavirus/questions-and-answers/)

<sup>24</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-about-quality-and-standards-during-coronavirus-pandemic/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-about-quality-and-standards-during-coronavirus-pandemic/)

<sup>25</sup> See <https://discoveruni.gov.uk/corona-covid-19-information/> and <https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus-updates-hub>

<sup>26</sup> See <https://gmhigher.ac.uk/>

<sup>27</sup> See [www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/students-in-england-encouraged-to-apply-now-for-student-finance>