

Independent students who are Care Leavers

The information on this page is for young people who are thinking of applying to Warwick as an Undergraduate student for 2025 entry and are [independent because they are leaving care](#). If you are planning to apply elsewhere, we would encourage you to contact your university choices to see what support is available to you.

1. 'Care Leaver' definition

If you are a 'Care Leaver', this means that you were in the care of your local authority for at least 13 weeks at any time since the age of 14 and were in care on your 16th birthday. 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 relatives under a guardianship agreement

If you are under 19, have left care and have been living independently, we can also offer you additional support. Or, if you have never been in the care of your local authority, but are not in contact with both of your parents (known as 'estranged'), please go to our [Independent students who are estranged](#) webpage for further advice and guidance.

If you have spent 3 or more months in care but don't think you are a 'Care Leaver', please see our [information for 'Care Experienced' students](#).

2. Applying to University

Students apply to university through the UCAS application form. This form includes your personal details, personal circumstances (this is where you can tell your university choices that you are/have been in care), educational history, predicted grades (where applicable), your course choices, your personal statement and your reference.

We would encourage you to tick the 'care experienced' tick-box on the UCAS form so that your university choices are notified of your circumstances and can offer you appropriate support, information and guidance. You can find out more about this tick-box online [here](#).

Evidence

The universities you apply to may ask you to provide evidence of your care experience so that appropriate support can be arranged for you. At Warwick, we advise students to provide evidence in their UCAS reference (i.e. your referee confirming your circumstances in their written reference). If the university requires more information from you, we will contact you directly.

If you have applied to Warwick and have any questions about providing evidence, please contact our WP Lifecycle Team at lifecycleteam@warwick.ac.uk.

Please have a look at the links below for more information about applying to university:

- [Care Experienced students](#) (this is UCAS's guidance for both Care Leavers and Care Experienced students)
- [How to apply](#)
- [When to apply](#)
- [Choosing a course](#)
- [Personal statements](#)
- [Individual needs/support](#)

3. Applying for Student Finance

You can apply to Student Finance England (or the equivalent awarding body in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) for financial support with your tuition fees and living costs.

Tuition Fee Loans: These loans are paid directly to your university.

Maintenance Loans: These loans are usually means-tested (based on household income) and are paid to you.

To apply for financial support as a Care Leaver, you will need to complete an online application form and apply as an **'Independent Student'**. Your local authority (usually a Personal Adviser or Social Worker) will need to provide a letter to support your application. Should Student Finance approve your application, your 'household income' will usually be assessed as £0 and you will usually be awarded the maximum maintenance loan for the duration of your undergraduate course.

There is more information about how to apply to Student Finance England as a Care Leaver online [here](#). Please note that the supporting letter from your local authority must confirm:

1. That you were looked after by a local authority (this includes being placed in foster care by your local authority)
2. The dates that you were in care
3. That you have not returned to the care of your parent(s) prior to the first day of the first academic year of your course

For more information about Student Finance, please go to:

- [UCAS: Tuition Fees & Student Loans](#)
- [Student Finance England](#)
- [Student Finance information for Care Leavers](#)
- [Student Finance information for Estranged Students](#)

4. Support from Warwick for Care Leavers

Students who are independent because they are Care Leavers are able to access a wide range of support from Warwick. **Please note that some of this support is provisional on you being assessed as Independent by Student Finance because you are a Care Leave (see Section 3 above):**

Stage	Support
Application Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support for travel to Open Days/Offer Holder Open Days – please contact lifecycleteam@warwick.ac.uk for more information A Contextual Offer for successful applicants
Undergraduate Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support: A Warwick Bursary of up to <u>£2,500</u> per year, a Widening Participation Bursary of <u>£1,500</u> per year for Independent Students who are Care Leavers and a Warwick Scholars Bursary of up to <u>£2,000</u> per year. Accommodation: Eligibility for 52-week on-campus accommodation for the duration of your studies (if desired). This accommodation package includes a 40/44-week campus room plus summer accommodation over the vacation period. There is more information about Warwick’s accommodation online here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note that students are required to move rooms as part of the University's 52-week campus accommodation package. Students will usually move once at the start of the summer break and then at the end of the summer break. However, please note that some students may need to stay in an alternative, temporary room in early September during the University’s shut down period, before moving into their term time room. You can find out more about this, and more information about 52-week accommodation costs, in our 52-Week Campus Accommodation FAQs. Warwick Scholars: Eligibility for the Warwick Scholars Undergraduate Programme. This programme provides students with access to bespoke activities, along with academic, personal and professional development opportunities. WP Lifecycle Team: Additional support from the WP Lifecycle Team. We offer 1-1 check-ins and signposting support, for example, while you’re on course.
Postgraduate Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship (WTMSS): Priority eligibility for the WTMSS scholarship scheme.

Care Leavers also have access to a range of support services open to all students across the University, including:

- A **Personal Tutor** who you can reach out to for additional support while you study at Warwick (we would encourage you to share information about your circumstances with your Personal Tutor so that appropriate support can be offered during your studies)
- **Wellbeing Support**
- **Disability Services**
- Accommodation Support from the **Residential Community Team**
- **Student Advice Centre**

Full details of the support available can be found on our 'Independent students who are Care Leavers' webpage: <https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/disruptededucation/careleavers/>

5. Further support

If you have any questions about the support available to Independent Students who are Care Leavers at Warwick, please contact our WP Lifecycle Team at lifecycleteam@warwick.ac.uk.

The following links may also be helpful:

- **Become** – a charity for children in care and young care leavers
- **Buttle UK** – a charity providing funding for young people
- **EaCES Handbook** – provides support and signposting to estranged students and care experienced students
- **IMO** – provides a range of support to care experienced teenagers
- **Propel** – education/university support for care experienced young people
- **Rees Foundation** – support for care experienced adults
- **ThisIsUs** – a project and scholarship programme for care leavers and estranged students led by the Unite Foundation