

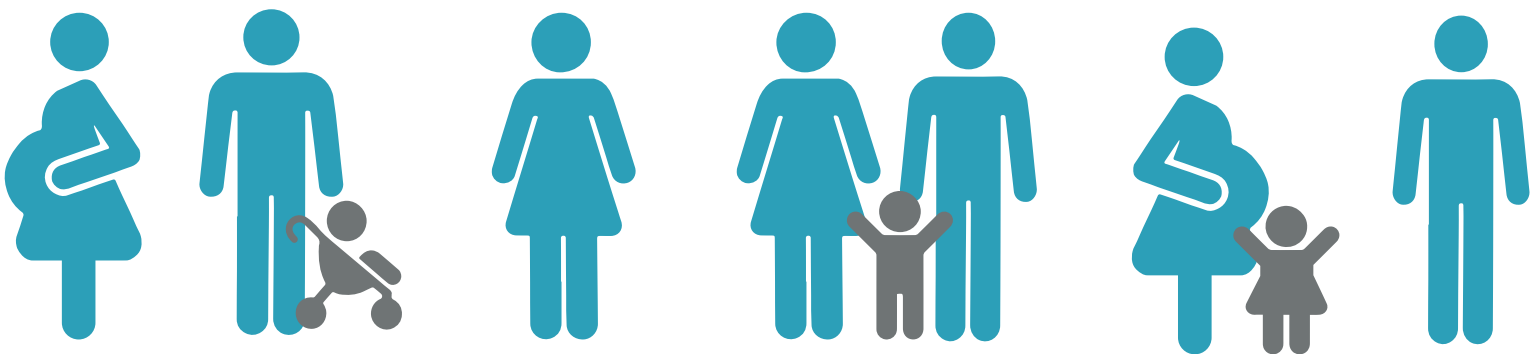


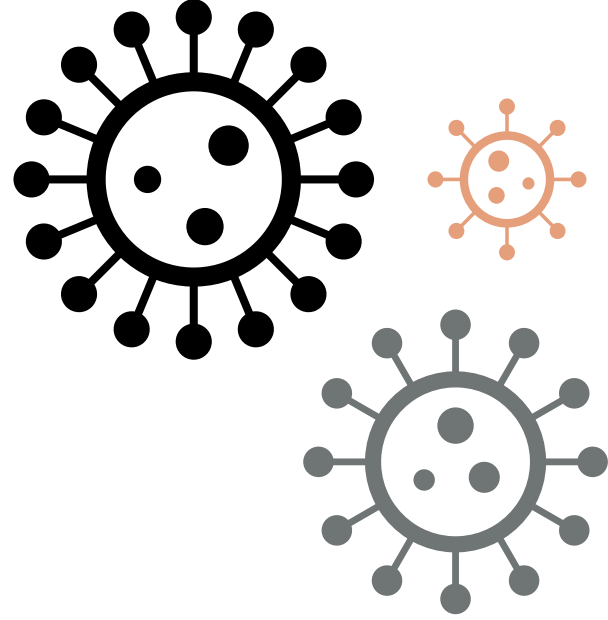
Department  
for Education



FACTSHEETS

## Advice for care leavers during and after Covid-19





# Factsheet for care leavers who are higher education students during coronavirus (COVID-19)

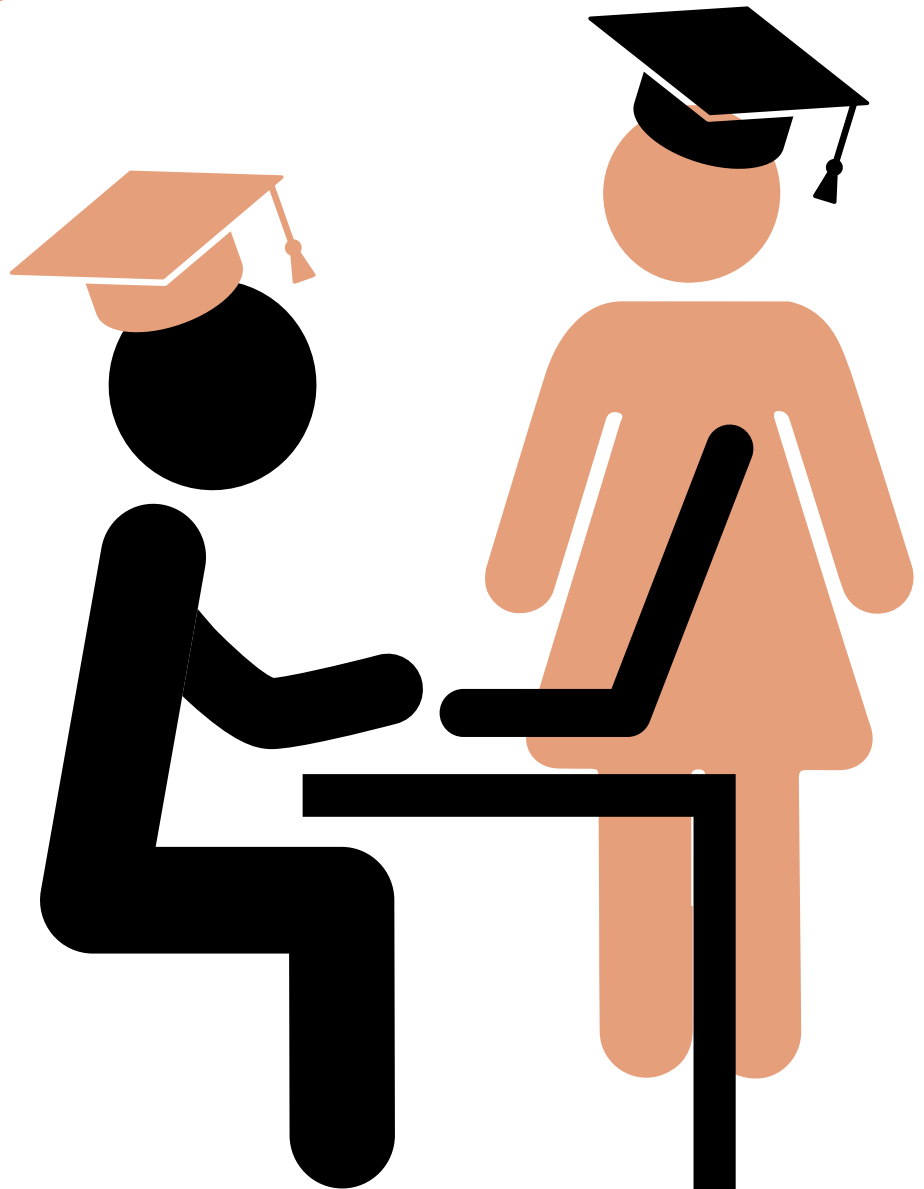
(accurate as of May 2020, please check gov.uk for latest Covid19 guidance)

## Main things you need to know:

The government has asked every university to provide you with as much support as they can during this time. This support may differ between each university based on the needs of their students and individual circumstances.

You will continue to receive payments of maintenance loans for the remainder of the current academic year, regardless of whether you are still living in university residences.

You should contact your designated member of staff (DMS) or relevant support at your university and remain in contact with your Personal Adviser (PA) or Key Worker to ensure you are getting the support you need.



## I am worried that I'll be evicted from my university accommodation, can they do this during COVID-19?

Government have advised institutions to operate a 'non-eviction' policy, so that no student is required to leave halls if their contract is up, if their rental agreement does not cover holiday periods or if they are unable to pay their rent. This applies whether students are self-isolating or not and is particularly important in the case of international students, care leavers and estranged students.

Students in houses with multiple occupants (HMOs) are **protected from eviction by new rules** developed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

**Institutions will need to make clear to the manager of any privately owned halls of residence that evictions are unacceptable** and the hall manager must – if they are unable to accommodate a student – work through local partnerships, such as with the local authority and lettings agents, in order to prevent students being made homeless.

**If the university or college has a nomination agreement** with the private halls provider, this relationship should be leveraged to avoid evictions.

**Where no relationship exists**, universities or colleges should ensure that the private halls provider has solutions in place. Under no circumstances should students be evicted.



## What if my accommodation provider has told me to return home/leave?

**Accommodation providers should not instruct you to return home or leave.** If an accommodation provider did instruct you to leave the property, you should speak to your university DMS immediately to see if alternative provision is available or contact your PA for support. The Government has encouraged providers to consider appropriate reimbursements for students if they have been asked to leave.

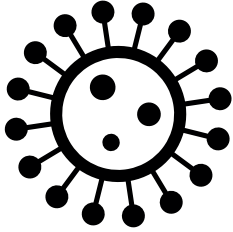
## I have lost my job, how will I pay rent?

**Many students are facing financial difficulties as a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak.** You will continue to receive scheduled payments of loans towards your living costs for the remainder of the current, 2019/20, academic year and many universities maintain hardship funds, which can be used where necessary.

You should also be aware that if you are on a PAYE contract, for example if you have a part time job, you may still be **entitled to 80% of your normal income.** Guidance on this can be found [here](#).

**You should also contact your local authority for further support options.**

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



**I've signed a contract for my accommodation for next academic year but I no longer wish to move in. What can I do? Students in Scotland are able to leave their tenancies early, why can I not do the same?**

If you have already signed an accommodation contract for next year and, because of the outbreak, **think it may no longer fit your requirements, please talk directly to your housing provider.**

**You are able to end or surrender your fixed term tenancy early if you reach an agreement with your landlord.** If you have a joint tenancy agreement, all tenants will need to agree to the surrender. Even if your circumstances have changed due to the effects of the coronavirus outbreak, you still won't have an automatic right to leave early.

**If you think your accommodation provider is treating you unfairly, you can raise a complaint** under the accommodation codes of practice as long as your provider is a code member. The codes can be found at the [Student Accommodation Code](#), the [National Residential Landlords Association](#), and [Unipol](#).

**I'm living in halls of residence/shared accommodation during COVID-19 and think someone is displaying symptoms, what should I do?**

**If you are living in halls of residence or shared accommodation where you share facilities, Public Health England have published guidance on [social distancing and guidance on self-isolation and staying at home](#).**

**For the purposes of this guidance, you should consider your student house as a single household.** If you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for at least 7 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days.

For anyone else in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for at least 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.

**[Further guidance on self-isolating in a student house.](#)**

**Your university or college should support you to do this.** You should discuss this with your university or college, and with the manager of your halls if they are privately owned, or the landlord of the shared accommodation.



## Will I be able to sit my final exams and receive the grades and degree I deserve?

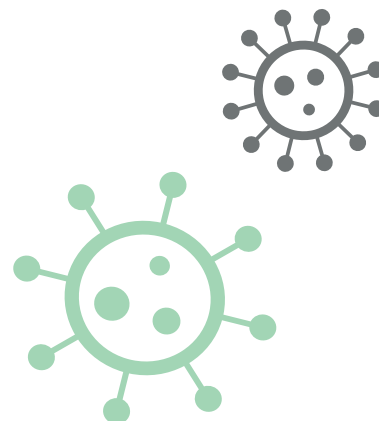
We are working with the sector to ensure **universities are able to make all reasonable efforts for students to continue and complete their studies.** This includes moving learning online.

[The Office for Students](#) (OfS), the higher education regulator in England, has published guidance on how universities can maintain the quality of courses and the credibility of qualifications during the pandemic.

**As the situation develops, the government wants to ensure students continue to leave university with qualifications that have real value, reflect their hard work and allow people to progress.** We are working closely with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education to help to make sure this happens.

## I don't feel like I'm receiving adequate teaching from my university. What action can I take to address this?

**If you don't feel like you are continuing to receive a good standard of education from your university,** you are entitled to make a complaint if you feel like your university has not taken the right steps to improve the situation. You should first speak to your university to see if they can resolve your complaint.



## If I have to extend my year - will student finance be extended to help me cover that?

**Yes. The Student Loans Company has published [guidance for current students](#) to answer these types of questions.**

If you have to extend your current academic year, meaning your course will now last longer than 30 weeks and 3 days, the Student Loans Company can assess you for what is called a **'Long Courses Loan'** which will provide **additional support for your maintenance.**

How much you could get will also depend on your individual circumstances, like your household income, study/living arrangements, and you'll usually be asked you for evidence of these things before your entitlement is worked out.



## Will I still get student finance next year if I have to repeat or extend my study?

Yes. The Student Loans Company already has a process for handling this type of situation where students sometimes have to repeat a year for various reasons.

**For any period of previous study you will still be able to get a Maintenance Loan.**

**A Tuition Fee Loan is available for the full length of your first course, plus one extra year if needed.** If you don't have enough years of funding left to cover your course fees, you may be able to get an extra year of support due to compelling personal reasons.

If you're eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs), you'll receive DSA support for the duration of your studies. DSAs are unaffected by previous study



## I've lost my (part-time) job. What support is available for me?

If you have an employment contract, you should **speak to your employer about the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#)**, which has been set up to help pay staff wages and keep people in employment.

**Maintenance loan payments will continue for the remainder of the current academic year.**

The Universities Minister has specifically written to higher education providers on 26th March, asking them to pay particular attention to additional financial hardships faced by student staff reliant on income from campus-based jobs.

If you are suffering particular hardship, **many universities will already have hardship funds** to support students most in need and you should contact your institution.

## Can I still access mental health support at this time?

We recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the coronavirus outbreak. **Many providers are bolstering their existing mental health services, and adapting delivery to means other than face to face.**

**The Government encourages students to stay in touch with their provider's student support and welfare teams**, as these services are likely to be an important source of support during this period of social distancing. Students struggling with their mental health at this time can also access support via [the NHS](#) and online resources from [Public Health England](#), along with support from mental health charity [Mind](#).