

FAQ: CARE-EXPERIENCED BURSARY (CEB)

Background

1. What is the Care-Experienced Bursary?

The Care-Experienced Bursary is a non-income assessed, non-repayable grant of £8,100 per year for eligible* Scottish domiciled students in full-time Further (FE) or Higher Education (HE) at college or university with care experience.

**eligibility is discussed in more detail in Question 9*

2. What was the rationale behind the recommendation to introduce a bursary for care-experienced students?

The Commission on Widening Access was established in 2015 to advise the Scottish Government on what more could be done to improve access to HE for those with care experience or from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In developing its recommendations, the Commission gathered evidence from a wide range of sources. In respect of care-experienced learners, the Commission heard from Who Cares? Scotland and directly from care-experienced learners; it received evidence from organisations who support care-experienced learners through its Call for Evidence; and it held an 'Expert Group' on care experience to shape its recommendations, which involved learners and professional organisations. The Commission also held an Expert Group to look specifically at student finance.

The recommendation to provide a bursary for care-experienced learners was proposed by the Commission as it received evidence that finance – and particularly loan debt – was acting as a barrier to undertaking HE for this group of learners.

In response to the independently chaired Student Support Review, the Care-Experienced Bursary was extended to Further Education Students from Academic Year 2018/19.

3. Why did the Scottish Government introduce the Care-Experienced Bursary?

The Care-Experienced Bursary was introduced in response to the First Minister's acceptance of the Commission on Widening Access recommendation 22: "*The Scottish Government (SG) should replace student living cost loans with a non-repayable bursary and provide a more flexible package of student support with learners with a care-experience from academic year 2017/18*": <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2016/03/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/documents/00496619-pdf/00496619-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00496619.pdf>

The policy intention was to remove the financial barrier identified by the Commission, provide enhanced living cost support and also to act as an incentive

for people with experience of care to enter FE and HE. It is not intended to replace other statutory entitlement to funding support provided.

4. *When was the Care-Experienced Bursary introduced and at what rate?*

The Care-Experienced Bursary was introduced at a rate of £7,625 in Academic Year 2017/18. It was made available to both new and continuing eligible students in HE only. At that time, care-experienced students in FE were awarded the maximum FE bursary level of £4,185.

5. *When was the Care-Experienced Bursary increased to £8,100 and what were the reasons behind this increase?*

The independent review of FE and HE student support published its final report in November 2017 and recommended that care-experienced students across FE and HE should be able to access a bursary of £8,100 per year. In response to the review's findings, Ministers announced the Care-Experienced Bursary would increase to £8,100 from Academic Year 2018/19.

6. *Why should the financial support for care-experienced students be maximised?*

The Care-Experienced Bursary recommendation was based on evidence that those with care experience were less likely to enter HE, in part, due to the prospect of incurring financial debt through taking out a student loan. This group of learners may feel less able to rely on family for future financial support. The bursary is in recognition of these particular circumstances, which appeared to be presenting a barrier to further study for those with care experience. The 2019 Scotland-wide research study *'Being a student with care experience is very daunting'* (O'Neill et al) found that financial challenges can be further complicated for care experienced students by the lack of a financial safety net from family. Students described being in precarious financial situations, suffering stress and anxiety as a result, which impacts on their studies.

The policy intention was not only to remove the prospect of debt and provide living cost support, adding value to the existing support provided by Local Authorities, but also to act as an incentive for people with experience of care to enter FE and HE, as they are currently much less likely to go on to study than their peers.

Care-experienced students should be able to engage in their learning and participate in a full range of activities as part of student life.

No student with experience of care should be placed at a financial disadvantage as a result of receiving the Care-Experienced Bursary.

7. *What should the Care-Experienced Bursary be used for?*

The Care-Experienced Bursary replaces the standard student support package of living cost loan and means-tested bursary, which aims to contribute towards the cost of living as a student and any additional costs incurred during a student's time at university or college.

Care-experienced students therefore receive an enhanced and more flexible support package, however, as the Care-Experienced Bursary acts a replacement to the standard support package, it should be used to cover similar costs.

8. *What does the Care Experienced Bursary not cover?*

The Care Experienced Bursary is not intended to be provided in place of existing financial support provided by Local Authorities or other sources.

As such, the intention is that the Care Experienced Bursary does not replace financial support such as Housing Benefit or financial support via Through Care and After Care support.

As above, no student with experience of care should be placed at a financial disadvantage as a result of receiving the Care-Experienced Bursary.

Care Experienced Bursary: eligibility

9. *Who is eligible for the Care Experienced Bursary?*

The Care Experienced Bursary is available to eligible full-time students undertaking an undergraduate course (HE) or FE course.

To be eligible for the bursary package in 2019/20, a student must:

- have been looked after by a UK Local Authority; and
- be under 26 years of age on first day of the first academic year of the course.* For most students, who start in the autumn term, the relevant date is 1 August.
- Are beyond their statutory school leaving date (for most students this will mean a minimum age of 16.)

The student must also have been in care within one of the allowed categories. The table at the end of this document provides information on what constitutes care experience for the purpose of the Care-Experienced Bursary.

**Following the 2019/20 Programme for Government commitment, the age limit of 26 will be removed from academic year 2020/2021.*

10. *What is the rationale for the age limit of 26th birthday on the Care Experienced Bursary?**

The age restriction aligns with related SG legislation for supporting care leavers, namely the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (as amended) and Parts 10 and 11 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 up to their 26th birthday.

***The age limit of 26 will no longer apply from academic year 2020/2021.*

11. *Is adoption an eligible category of care for the Care-Experienced Bursary?*

Currently, adoption itself is not a recognised status to be awarded the Care-Experienced Bursary. The student would need to evidence their care experience prior to their adoption in order to be eligible.

12. Is care-experience that occurred outside the UK considered as eligible?

No, the current criteria for the Care-Experienced Bursary requires a student to have been looked after by a Local Authority in the UK.

13. Do previous study rules apply to the Care-Experienced Bursary?

Yes, if a student has already done an FE or HE course, this may affect their eligibility for student financial support including the Care-Experienced Bursary. Students claiming the Care-Experienced Bursary who are not eligible due to their previous study should be awarded a loan only in line with general previous study rules.

14. Is the Care-Experienced Bursary available during the long (summer) vacation?

No, the Care Experienced Bursary is not paid during the long (summer) vacation.

The Care-Experienced Bursary is paid using the same payment model as the standard student support package. At present, students receive an initial payment, which is a double payment on the first day of the course, followed by further monthly payments for the duration of that session/course year.

15. Are Care-Experienced students undertaking an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course eligible for the CEB?

If the relevant college is claiming credits for the ESOL course then, eligible care-experienced students would be eligible to access the Care-Experienced Bursary.

Care-Experienced Bursary: interaction with benefits

16. How does the Care-Experienced Bursary impact on Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) entitlements and/or Housing Benefits?

The Care-Experienced Bursary will interact with some benefits, including Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

The Care-Experienced Bursary counts as income for the DWP, subject to the usual student income disregards. There is a disregard for housing benefit of £693 of the annual Care-Experienced Bursary award, and the remaining amount is counted in full as income, thus reducing or ending the housing benefit for that student. The same applies for other 'legacy benefits' like income support or income-related employment and support allowance.

If the student receives Universal Credit (UC), there is a different disregard of £110 per month, and the rest is counted in full as income, thus reducing or ending the UC for that student.

Child Poverty Action Group's (CPAG's) *Benefits for Students in Scotland handbook* is available free online and you can read more about how student funding affects benefits in chapters 16 and 17 at:
www.onlinepublications.cpag.org.uk
(use the + beside the handbook title to navigate).

Given the range of personal circumstances that students can experience, it is not possible in this document to provide an exhaustive list of benefit interactions, therefore practitioners should support students to access and engage with dedicated financial advice services.

Corporate Parenting duties

17. What duties do local authorities and other Corporate Parents have towards preparing and supporting looked after children for leaving care?

Overall, Local Authorities and other corporate parents must ensure that their systems, procedures and processes support the young people, both within their care experience and beyond. In relation to supporting people with experience of care into FE and HE, they should ensure that all students with care experience, including care leavers, are in receipt of all available financial support, ensuring maximum use of discretionary powers and funds. Financial support is not solely about maximising financial entitlements, but also about financial education in its widest sense, including being exposed to experiences and to learn about money.

Corporate parents should strive to achieve positive cultural change by providing ongoing person-centred, non-judgmental and non-punitive support for students with experience of care. This can be achieved through removing financial and practical barriers, reducing any negative impact on the financial security and wellbeing of all care-experienced students. The collective aim is for consistent practice across all Local Authorities.

Comprehensive training and practical support is available from Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS, the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection. It is acknowledged that corporate parents have a wide range of roles and responsibilities, and may require access to bespoke resources or support to understand and implement these.

18. What specific duties do Local Authorities have towards young people leaving care at age 16 or older?

Ensuring continuity of relationships is crucially important for many care leavers, as is continuing to offer support and assistance at levels similar to when individuals were previously looked after. For this reason the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced Continuing Care to provide eligible care leavers with the opportunity to remain in the same care setting they were living in immediately before they ceased to be looked after. Please refer to the guidance on Part 11 (Continuing Care) of the 2014 Act for full details on this entitlement.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also updates and expands eligibility for Aftercare services. Please see [guidance on Part 10 \(Aftercare\) of the 2014 Act](#) for full details on this entitlement. It is important to note that eligibility for Aftercare applies to all care leavers, regardless of their care setting while they were looked after. Young people who were looked after at home are, if they meet the criteria following a pathway assessment, eligible for Aftercare support.

Other forms of support

19. Can care-experienced students in HE apply for the Young Students' Bursary or Independent Student Bursary and living cost loan, alongside the Care Experienced Bursary?

The Care-Experienced Bursary is not payable alongside the Young Students' Bursary or the Independent Students' Bursary.

Students in receipt of the Care-Experienced Bursary are not eligible to receive the living-costs loan; however they can apply for the living-costs grants (e.g. Care-Experienced Accommodation Grant, Dependents Grant, Disabled Students' Allowance or Lone Parents' Grant).

20. What other support is available to students receiving the Care-Experienced Bursary?

Care-Experienced Accommodation Grant (HE)

This grant is to help care-experienced students in HE with their accommodation costs during the long break between each year of their course.

The eligibility criteria for this grant is the same as the Care-Experienced Bursary in terms of the age and definition. The Scottish Government is working on the commitment to remove the upper age limit for the Care-Experience bursary from 2020/21, including considerations of the Accommodation Grant.

Care-experienced students on a full year or part year placement paid and or unpaid will be eligible to apply for the accommodation grant.

The maximum that can be paid is £105 per week during the summer holiday. It is paid directly accommodation providers, as opposed to students.

When applying for the grant students will be asked if they are in receipt of Housing Benefit or support from their Social Services department. If the full cost of their accommodation is being met by Housing benefit or Social Services then they will not be eligible to apply for the grant.

Plus one year (HE)

Students are allowed an additional year of funding (+1 year) to support them in any of the following circumstances:

- *A repeat year (medical, compassionate or academic)*
- *An intercalated year*
- *A change of course providing they are not studying for a level of qualification that they already hold, or a lower level qualification. (e.g. an HND holder would not get a +1 year to study an HNC).*

Care Experienced students are entitled to an additional +1 year on top of this, if they require it to complete their studies (the above rules are still applicable for this additional year). The student can also use this additional +1 year to complete one year of their course over two years, and therefore, retain their bursary and other living-cost grants for both years (tuition fees would be payable in the first of the two years).

Further Information

21. Where can care-experienced students get further advice?

Care-experienced students can contact the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and their institution (who may be able to offer additional bursaries and scholarships) for advice. The contacts below may also be helpful for care experienced students:

- *National Union of Students Scotland – www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-scotland*
- *Propel – www.propel.org.uk*
- *Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum – www.staf.scot/*
- *Who Cares? Scotland – www.whocarescotland.org*
- *CELCIS: <https://www.celcis.org>*

22. What wider support is available to support care-experienced students with the increase to their student funding?

Student support services, personal advisers and other practitioners may want to signpost or support students to access the following services:

- *Citizens Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/>*
- *Money Advice Scotland: <https://www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk/>*
- *Young Scot: <https://young.scot/>*
- *Who Cares? Scotland: <https://www.whocarescotland.org/>*

Definitions

Looked After Children

-A 'child' means a person under the age of eighteen years;^[1]

^[2]

for whom they are providing accommodation under section 25 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995;^[3](b) who is subject to a compulsory supervision order or an interim compulsory supervision order under the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011);^[4](d) who is subject to an order outwith Scotland for whom they have responsibilities as respects the child ^[5](e) in respect of whom a permanence order has been made and has not ceased to have effect. ^[6]

Care leaver

The definition of a care leaver is described in section 29 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, as amended by section 66 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. From 1 April 2015 a young person will become a 'care leaver' if they cease to be 'looked after' on, or at any time after, their sixteenth birthday and is less than age twenty-six.

Care-experienced Young People (no legal definition)

Young people who have been in care at some point may self-identify as "care-experienced". From a policy perspective, we can estimate this by assuming every individual only entered and left care once and that the rate of inflow and outflow is stable(ish) from one year to another. The situation is much more complex but has been greatly simplified for estimation purposes. For example, this method gives a total estimate of approximately around 5000 individuals per year so approximately 30,000 people currently aged between 18 and 24 years of age. However, without a specific set of criteria, this is not an accurate indicator of number of people with experience of care.

^[1] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/section/15>

^[2] Section 17(6) Children (Scotland) Act 1995

^[3] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/36/section/25>

^[4] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/1/section/83>

^[5] (under section 33(1) of this Act or section 190 of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (asp 1))

^[6] on an application by them under section 80 of the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 (asp 4),

Type of Care-Experience	Type of arrangement	Eligible for CEB?
Foster care	Unlike adoption, fostering is a temporary arrangement - on either a short or long term basis - and many children in foster care will return to their birth family.	Yes
Kinship care – placed by Local Authority	Kinship care is when a child is looked after by their extended family or close friends, if they cannot remain with their birth parents. When placed by a local authority this can be confirmed by Social Work – it's usually an alternative to Foster Care.	Yes
Kinship Care – NOT placed by Local Authority	As above, kinship care is when a child is looked after by extended family. However, these agreements can either be ordered by the local authority or by private agreement between parties.	Yes
Residential care	Residential care homes offer young people a safe place to live away from their families. Residents live alongside a number of other young people in the home.	Yes
Supervision Requirement with NO condition of residence (Looked after at home)	Where a child or young person is subject, through the Children's Hearing system, to a Supervision Requirement with no condition of residence, that child continues to live at their normal residence. This is known as being looked after at home.	Yes
Supervision Requirement with a condition of residence (Looked after away from home)	Where a child has either: been through the Children's Hearings system and is subject to a Supervision Requirement <i>with a condition of residence</i> ; is subject to an order made or authorisation or warrant granted by virtue of Chapter 2, 3 or 4 of Part II of the 95 Act; is being provided with accommodation under Section 25 (a voluntary agreement); or is placed by a local authority which has made a permanence order under Section 80 of the Adoption and Children Act 2007. In these cases, the child is cared for away from their normal place of residence	Yes