



SOUTHWARK
COLLEGE



A Guide for Students



LEWISHAM
COLLEGE



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Important Contacts

Senior College Lead, Learner Experience: _____

Named Contact for Care-Experienced Students:

Designated Teacher: _____

Participation Coordinator: connects@mycovenant.org.uk

Contact your named care-experienced student college contact if you need support with:

- A bank account
- Finding work experience (depending on your level and area of study)
- Finding care leaver friendly paid work/employment
- Finding apprenticeships (and support applying)
- Leaving care/transitioning to independent living
- Transitioning to University
- Academic support (college studies)
- Accessing free legal support or advocacy
- CV and employability support
- Universal Credit support
- Finding leisure activities.





Preparing for College

MAKING AN APPLICATION

If you are unsure which course you would like to study, you may be able to attend a **taster session** for the subject(s) you are interested in.

If you know which course you would like to apply for, you can apply directly on our website. Click on the course you are interested in studying and click 'Apply Now'.

Once you've been accepted for a course, you will need to come and enrol at the college before you start, so make sure you keep an eye on your emails for your invitation.

Support Starting College

IF YOU ARE AGED 16-18

16-18 Enhanced Bursary

As a student with care experience, you may be eligible for additional financial support which can be calculated as part of a needs assessment. This means you will need to apply for a bursary through your college.

You will need evidence of your care status such as a section 20 letter or supporting letter from your local authority dated within the last three months (this is a letter from your social worker or borough confirming that you are in their care or were in their care at some point in your childhood).

You do not need a bank account to make the application **unless you are eligible to receive payments.**

16+ Student Zip Oyster Travel Card

If you are under 18, ask your Social Worker, Foster Carer or Keyworker for support applying for a travel card.

Borrowing a college laptop

If you don't have access to a computer at home, you may be entitled to the use of a college laptop for the entire academic year **if you are approved for the college's bursary fund.**

Supporting your progression

As part of your Care Plan as a student with care experience, the college is required to complete a **PEP (Personal Education Plan) meeting** every term with you, your guardian, Social Worker, college Designated Teacher and your Virtual School Teacher, to discuss your progress, wishes, feelings and aspirations.



IF YOU ARE AGED 19+

Advanced Learner Loan

This could include a contribution to childcare costs, reimbursement for college books, trips and educational visits. You will need to apply for your bursary through the college's website. You can contact the college bursary team with any queries. [Iscollege.paymystudent.com/portal/](https://college.paymystudent.com/portal/)

18+ Student Oyster photocard

If you are aged 18 or over, a student, and living in a London borough, you can get discounted travel with an Oyster photocard. See the Oyster website for more information on how to apply and the eligibility criteria. <https://orlo.uk/OFFLq>

Supporting You



CARE LEAVER COVENANT OFFERS

The Care Leaver Covenant has a wide variety of offers that Care Experienced students can access through our **Connects platform**. The Connects platform is for care experienced young people and the supportive adults that work with them to explore offers that the Care Leavers Covenant and their partners have available.

Below are a couple of examples but you can view all the opportunities here.

50% Off PureGym Memberships for Care Leavers

PureGym is offering half price memberships to care leavers. To take advantage of this opportunity, please register for Connects at <https://mycovenant.org.uk/for-care-leavers/connects/>

AA Driving Theory Test App – Free Download

To support care leavers to become competent and safe drivers The AA Charitable Trust will provide free of charge the AA Driving School Theory Test App, which care leavers can use to prepare themselves for their theory test.



Sign up to Connects today.
We're a network of opportunities.

Care leavers and support workers can sign up to Connects. We will keep you up to date with relevant work, education and recreational opportunities, as well as information about the support that care leavers may be able to access. In addition to this, care leavers will be automatically entered into our give-aways!

Scan me!



Your benefits.

- ✓ It's completely free.
- ✓ Financial Support.
- ✓ Job Opportunities
- ✓ Work Experience.
- ✓ Exclusive Giveaways.

To register, you must be:

A Care Leaver aged 16 - 25.

Or a Support Worker.

Living in England.

Talk to us!

0800 - 0773557
info@mycovenant.org.uk
@CareLeaverCov





DID YOU KNOW?

- If you are a Care Leaver in full-time education, **you may be exempt from paying council tax.**
- If you are a Care Leaver and live independently, you may be entitled to up to **70% off your water bill** through discounted tariffs.
- If you are a Care Leaver, aged 25 or under and you are in full-time education, you should not be expected to attend the Job Centre Plus for appointments in person to claim **Universal Credit**, especially during college hours. Your education takes priority, and you should not be expected to look for work during this time.
- You can access free additional tuition for English and maths in college with **Get Further** by emailing hello@getfurther.org.uk. If you are struggling with a different academic subject, please contact your Participation Coordinator at the Care Leaver Covenant or personal adviser within your local authority.
- You can access **free counselling through the college** if you are struggling emotionally or with your mental health. Please speak to a member of your support team to be referred.

Financial and Independent Living Support

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM CHARITIES

- **Spark Foundation** awards grants of £600 towards expenses including driving lessons, activities and holidays, or setting up home.
www.sparkfoundation.org.uk/FAQGrants.html
- **Capstone Care Leavers Trust** awards grants to people aged 17-25 for further education courses, higher education courses, training courses, laptops, study materials, driving lessons, and household goods (such as sofas, chairs, cookers, fridge, freezer, washing machine etc.)
www.capstonecareleavertrust.org/eligibility-criteria
- **REES Foundation** provides support for Care Leavers regardless of age. You can sign up to their amazing newsletter at www.reesfoundation.org
- **Turn2Us** help people understand what benefits and grants they are eligible for. www.turn2us.org.uk. You can also contact your personal advisers to understand your local offer and your eligibility for additional financial support.



INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORT

- **The House Project** is a national organisation started by Care Leavers. It provides an opportunity for young people leaving care to work collaboratively and become a team, support each other and learn the skills you need to be independent. Check with your Local Authority at <https://www.thehouseproject.org/for-young-people>
- **Home - Help at Hand** is a useful resource designed to offer advice and guidance whilst for young people in care and leaving care. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand>
- The **estranged and care experienced student guide** offers advice around independent living amongst lots of other useful information. <https://sites.google.com/view/eaces-handbook>
- **Pantry** offers affordable food. No evidence is required for those with care experience to access this service. You pay £6 and receive £30-£40 of shopping. When you no longer need the service, you can stop. <https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk/pantry-listings>
- Through the Helping Hands initiative, **EQUANS** will continue to support those with care experience by carrying out home improvements. More information can be found at <https://mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/home-improvements>

Progression and Employment

Progression support and advice (including employment):

- **BECOME** offers advice and guidance for care-experienced young people up to age 27, if you have any questions about your rights and entitlements (be it financial support, housing, education, life coaching etc) or if you just need someone to talk to about how you're feeling. Call free on 0800 023 2033 or visit their website at becomecharity.org.uk
- **Drive Forward** helps young adults leaving foster or residential care to achieve your full potential with exciting and sustainable employment opportunities. <https://driveforwardfoundation.org>
- **EY Foundation** supports young people from low-income backgrounds to get paid work experience, employability skills training and career guidance. <https://eyfoundation.com/uk/en/home.html>
- **SmartWorks** provides one-hour, one-to-one interview preparation and confidence building sessions **for women seeking employment**, and a bespoke dressing consultation with two trained volunteers, to find an interview outfit that will fill you with confidence. This is free of charge and the clothes are yours to keep. **Please contact your named college contact to be referred for this service.** <https://smartworks.org.uk>
- **Hope for the Young** provides tailored one-to-one support and advice to young asylum seekers and refugees according to your needs and aspirations. Each young person referred to them will receive two - three hours of mentoring a week for six months in a local cafe or library. <https://hopefortheyoung.org.uk/mentoring>
- **Suited & Booted** supports vulnerable, unemployed and low-income men to get into employment by providing suitable interview clothing, advice and guidance. For a referral please visit - <https://mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/suited-booted-get-interview-ready>
- **Pathway Group's** Futures4All supports care leavers with training, housing, career, mental/physical health, finance, and childcare support. Find out more at <https://mycovenant.org.uk/opportunities/training-support-pathway-group>

Preparing for University

If you are 25 or under and do not currently have a Personal Advisor

assigned to you from your Local Authority, please contact your Local Authority and request one if you plan on attending University. They will be able to help you understand and access all the grants and support you are eligible for in the months leading up to your degree.

When applying for degrees, you can compare university offers of support for Care Leavers through <https://propel.org.uk/UK/>. Make sure you look at the offers of support for those with care experience pre-application, during your application and after enrolment at the University. Do they have a specified point of contact for support through application? Do they give a contextual offer for those with care experience (where the entry grade requirement for the course is lower than standard)? What is the value of their annual bursary payment for those with care experience? Do they have mentoring programmes?

Many universities offer a '**Supported Entry Scheme**', which offers benefits such as contextual offers, a specified point of contact for support through application, mentoring programs and university visits.

For help with your application contact your Careers Advisor within the college or your Participation Coordinator at the Care Leaver Covenant. Make sure you **use all your UCAS choices** on your application.

Be careful **applying to different degrees at the same university through UCAS**, if it's a competitive course, as it may look like you are unsure of what you want to do. For example, midwifery tends to be a very competitive course so in this instance it's advisable to **not put down another subject**, such as adult nursing. Admissions tutors will want to see your commitment to that course. If you are unsure, ask your college Careers Advisor for guidance or contact the university you are applying to.

Visit the university campus and get a **bespoke tour**.

Make sure you apply as a Care Leaver when applying for your Student Finance. www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/care-leavers

Unite Foundation Scholarship offers free accommodation to successful candidates. They also cover your bills for up to three years of study. thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation-scholarship

The Sanctuary Scholarship is for anyone who has been offered a place at university and is seeking asylum or has refugee status in the United Kingdom. To be eligible to apply for the Sanctuary Scholarship, you must hold one of the following immigration statuses: UK asylum seeker, UK discretionary leave to remain (as a result of an asylum application), UK limited leave to remain (as a result of an asylum application), or Humanitarian protection (as a result of an asylum application). You will also be eligible if you are a dependent of someone with one of these immigration statuses. Research online to find out which UK universities offer Sanctuary Scholarships.

SCAN ME
Find out more about
connects! >>



Please contact your named college contact via Teams or email for help accessing any of the opportunities detailed in this manual.

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www.southwark.ac.uk