



## Guide for care leavers



Deciding to study at university is a big step for anybody. You'll be entering a world of new opportunities, new friends and new ways of thinking.

At the University of Birmingham, we offer the highest quality academic experience within a supportive environment. But if you're leaving care to come to university, we believe that you deserve a little extra support to help you make the right choices, get the financial help and assistance you're entitled to and be able to settle in quickly so that you can focus on your studies and enjoy your student experience.

This leaflet will teach you how we can help from your first interest in applying to university through to studying here. All our support is optional and you can decide what and how much support you need at any stage.

For pre-entry support and guidance and for advice throughout your time with us, *Julia Kingston* is your key contact – you'll find her details on the back of this leaflet.

# Thinking about university?

The Outreach team provides a variety of free events and activities to help you gain an insight into university life, and care leavers are given priority when places are allocated. Activities include:

## Summer schools

**Your Future – Your Choice** is a residential programme that gives students in Year 10 an opportunity to find out what it is like to study at university, and in particular a research-led institution like Birmingham. There are two broad academic streams – Health Sciences and Routes to the Professions.

The **Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP)** is for students in Year 12 and starts with a week-long summer residential in August and includes follow-up activities in Year 13. AEP is only open to students living within the West Midlands.

**Higher Education Insight (HEI)** is a national programme designed to support students from England and Wales who live outside of the Greater West Midlands region and are currently in Year 12.

At all summer schools you will stay in a University Hall of Residence, follow a programme of social activities and experience a taste of university life. All students are given support and guidance by our student ambassadors, who are current undergraduates at the University.

## Open days

Open days give you the perfect opportunity to visit our beautiful campus, and hear first-hand from our current students and teaching staff about living and learning at Birmingham.

On-campus visits and information sessions are also available for care leavers on request.

## Access to Birmingham (A2B)

The A2B scheme is designed to help students from families and communities in the West Midlands who have little or no experience of higher education find out about what studying at university involves. Care leavers from partner schools and colleges are automatically eligible. A successful A2B applicant will receive two offers from the University of Birmingham: the standard one and an alternative A2B offer. The A2B offer is typically a reduction of up to two A level grades (eg, BBB rather than AAB), conditional upon passing our A2B module. For more details see our webpage [www.birmingham.ac.uk/a2b](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/a2b)



# Welcome to the University of Birmingham

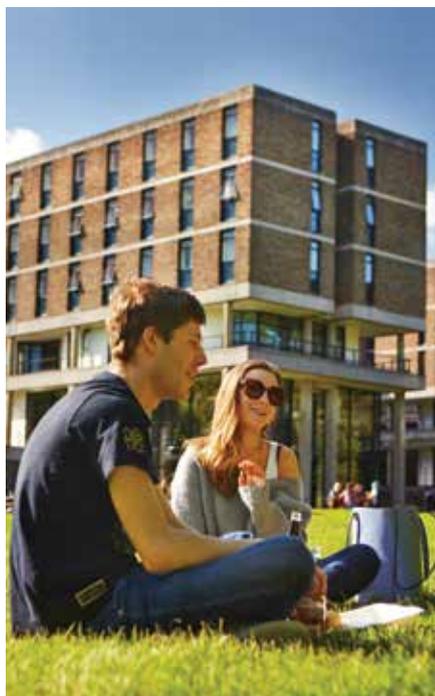
If you choose to attend the University you'll find a range of support available for care leavers. We strongly recommend that you tick the box on your UCAS application as this will help us send you information about the support we can offer.

## Accommodation

We will ensure that you have access to accommodation for 52 weeks a year for the duration of your course. A priority Chamberlain Award to cover the costs of University-owned Halls of Residence is available for care leavers. Alternatively there is a £3,000 bursary if you choose not to live in halls. The deadline for guaranteed accommodation and the Chamberlain Award is 31 May each year.

You can get advice and guidance on any welfare-related issues you may face during your time in University accommodation through our Mentor Scheme. All our student mentors are fully trained and available to help you from the moment you know you're coming to Birmingham, to when you move in and throughout your time with us.

*'[University is] an environment where nobody cares where you came from. You don't have to define or categorise yourself and that's probably the nicest thing, you can be anybody and meet anyone; no one cares where you've come from.'* Rachel



## Financial support

As part of your Pathway Plan you may be entitled to a one-off £2,000 Higher Education Bursary from your local authority. This is available to any care leaver who started their course before their 25th birthday, and does not need to be repaid. Talk to your Leaving Care Worker for more information.

The University has other bursaries available to enable students to undertake internships, work experience or overseas placements and care leavers are prioritised for all funding sources. For more information see [www.birmingham.ac.uk/ugfunding](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/ugfunding) Students who disclose on their UCAS form at the time of applying that they are in or have been in care will be reviewed for any relevant bursaries.

Universitas 21 provides a fully funded International Summer School placement with the National University of Singapore specifically for care leavers to take part in.

*'As part of this course, we went on a field trip to Cambodia and Thailand in which we experienced the different lifestyles of people: rich, poor and religious. This was one of the best experiences of my time in Southeast Asia. I had such a fantastic time on the programme, I learnt new things, made friends with people from all over the globe, and tried lots of new things that I never would have done otherwise.'* Max



## Student support and wellbeing

To support your transition to this new way of learning, you will have access to a comprehensive support system that includes the Academic Skills Centre based in the main library for additional support with general academic skills, academic writing and mathematics. In addition to your departmental personal tutor, we also provide a confidential service to help you manage practical, emotional and psychological issues that may impact on your academic success. You will also find a multi-faith chaplaincy.

Additionally, we offer an initial guidance session at the start of your time here upon request.

As a University of Birmingham undergraduate you will have access to our award-winning Careers Network, offering you help and support in planning a successful career on graduation. You will also have access to national award-winning internships and placements in the UK and overseas.



# The support steps outlined

1. For details about pre-entry support please contact:  
**Julia Kingston**  
E: [j.kingston@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.kingston@bham.ac.uk)  
T: 0121 414 8729

2. Following the UCAS deadline, we will contact you outlining the support available should you require it.

3. Once your place at Birmingham is confirmed, you will be invited to attend an induction where you can find out more about the support available.



## Useful web links:

**University of Birmingham:** [www.birmingham.ac.uk/careleavers](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/careleavers)

**Propel:** [propel.org.uk](http://propel.org.uk) – a website managed by the Who Cares Trust, designed to provide support and information to care leavers who want to enter higher education.

**Unite Foundation:** [www.unitefoundation.co.uk](http://www.unitefoundation.co.uk)

**Eve Brook Scholarship Fund:** [www.evebrookfund.org.uk](http://www.evebrookfund.org.uk)

**Buttle UK:** [www.buttleuk.org](http://www.buttleuk.org)

Download the '**Inspire Me!**' app for inspiring stories for care leavers by care leavers: [inspire-me-live.herokuapp.com](http://inspire-me-live.herokuapp.com)

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