



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*

# Support for Care Leavers and Estranged Students:

**YOUR JOURNEY AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK**

## Outreach

Matt Beswick, Widening Participation Officer, is our dedicated member of staff in our Widening Participation Team, who supports care experienced and estranged students prior to university. Matt works to support you in thinking about your future and more specifically, whether university is right for you.



Matt supports care experienced and estranged students by giving you, and the professionals and carers who support you, advice over the phone, by email and in person for an informal chat. Matt can help with general advice about university, student finance, student support and the courses available. Matt can arrange and cover transport costs to and from the University of York for a bespoke visit. Matt can also organise for a current university student to give you a tour of campus and answer any further questions. You are always welcome to bring a support worker or foster carer along too.

The Widening Participation Team run long-term programmes and residentials; any care experienced or estranged students who apply are given priority places. In addition, we run workshops, talks, conferences and campus visits specifically for care experienced and estranged students who are considering university. These happen all throughout the year including evenings and school holidays. Finally, if you would like to visit the University of York for an Open Day, Interview Day or Visit Day, we are happy to arrange transport as well as pay for your travel costs.

If you want to find out more, please contact Matt Beswick on [matt.beswick@york.ac.uk](mailto:matt.beswick@york.ac.uk) and Matt will keep you up to date when events occur.

## Contextual Admissions

We welcome and encourage talented students from all backgrounds to apply to York. Not everyone has had an equal opportunity to demonstrate their ability at school or college. Barriers can include the type of school you attended, where you live and other social and economic factors. Contextual offers promote fairness – they allow us to look at more than just exam results to assess potential and recognise achievements in context.

We know that talented students can achieve their potential whatever their background or family circumstances. We strive for a diverse student community which reflects our society – as we believe this will benefit everyone.

Contextual offers are a reduced offer of one or two grades below our typical entry requirements for UK undergraduate students.

You could be eligible if any of the following applies to you:

- you've spent time in local authority care (such as foster or residential care)
- you've taken part in a University of York Outreach programme
- you live in a UK area with low progression to university.

Additionally, the University of York Access Scheme aims to improve access to the University for applicants who have faced challenging circumstances. Through the Access Scheme you can provide further information which will be considered alongside your UCAS application.

## Dedicated Contact

Starting university is a daunting time for most students. At York we have a dedicated contact so that you have a single point of contact both before you get here and during your studies at York. Joanna Paluch-Edwards is the key contact for all new care leavers and estranged students, and you can contact her at any time if you have any questions or concerns relating to university life.

### Joanna can:

- Help with any questions you may have about our courses and what it's like to study at York
- Work with Matt to facilitate a tailored visit to the University where she will meet you and discuss what support will be available to you
- Meet with you when you start at York
- Put you in touch with a current student who can meet you on arrivals' day, help you settle in and take you for lunch. Where possible, this student will also be a care leaver or estranged student
- Offer emotional and practical support throughout your studies and direct you to other appropriate university services
- Keep you updated with news and opportunities through a monthly newsletter
- Put you in touch with other care leavers and estranged students at the university, if you would like this. There are a number of social activities that you can go along to – they are a fun and informal way to meet other students
- Offer you tailored budgeting advice that will help you manage your money effectively and meet your essential costs, whilst still being able to enjoy yourself!

## CONTACT DETAILS

You can contact Joanna using the details below:

student-independent@york.ac.uk

+44 (0) 1904 324140

[york.ac.uk/students/support/care-leavers](http://york.ac.uk/students/support/care-leavers)

[www.york.ac.uk/students/support/estranged](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/support/estranged)

## Message from Joanna:



Starting university can be a scary time. I will be in touch with you regularly during the few weeks before you start and continuing throughout your time here.

If you would like to visit and aren't able to attend an Open Day, I can arrange a tailored one-to-one tour and cover travel costs. I can also give you guidance on applying to Student Finance.

You may need support with organising your move to York; if this is the case, let me know and I will help. To make your arrival as smooth as possible, we provide you with a welcome pack that will include bedding and kitchen packs for students moving into our campus accommodation. If you do not have suitable luggage, please let me know as I can arrange for this to be provided. I can also put you in touch with a student buddy if you would like to have someone meet you and help you settle in on your first day.

Please get in touch with any questions you may have. I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the University of York – it's a fantastic place to study!

## Accommodation

The University of York has a collegiate system where students become a member of one of our colleges. Not only do each of our colleges provide accommodation, they also offer social activities, all the way through to support services. At the University of York we have a variety of accommodation to suit your needs and budgets. We can offer a variety of let lengths and we can guarantee you a 52 week accommodation let.

## Financial Support – Care Leavers and Estranged Students Bursary

The Care Leavers and Estranged Students Bursary is for students aged under 25, who come to York having been in the care of their UK local authority; or who have come through the national Foyer Federation (foyer.net), or who are irreconcilably estranged from their parents.

The value of the award is:

- Year 1: £3,000
- Year 2: £2,500
- Final year: £2,500 plus £1,000 to be paid in term three to assist with graduation and interview costs.

The package is available for each year of full-time study for the duration of the course, reduced by 50% for full-year sandwich placements or study abroad years.

## Careers Advice and Employment Support

As a care leaver or estranged student, you will be guaranteed an interview for the role of Student Ambassador, as long as you complete the application form to the best of your abilities. The Student Ambassador role is a flexible, paid, part-time position where you will be an ambassador for the University and a role model for prospective students. In addition to this role being a great opportunity to earn some money, it will also help you develop skills in communication, team work, social and cultural awareness and problem solving.

You can access personalised information and advice from an experienced team of staff, both on campus in the Careers and Placements building and remotely via phone, email and Skype.

We would encourage and support you to take up a wide range of opportunities available to you at York which build your readiness to find, compete for and secure the career options you want. The York Futures Scholarship programme will enable you to take full advantage of the many exciting personal and professional development opportunities such as work experience, placements, study abroad and placement year. Through the programme, you can apply for financial and practical support to suit your ambitions at the different stages of your time at York. For instance, we would encourage you to consider a year in industry or year abroad study and/or work option for which you could be eligible for an award of £6,000.

## Placement or Study Abroad Year

Here at York we offer a wide range of opportunities to study, work or volunteer abroad. A global experience during your degree can be life-changing. Not only will it enrich your academic studies, it will prepare you for a career in a competitive and global job market.

We aim to provide every student with an opportunity to develop a global perspective whether through study, work or volunteering. This global experience does not necessarily have to take place abroad, there are also ways to get involved here in York.

Additionally, there are opportunities to have a placement year which is a structured work experience opportunity that can be integrated into your studies, giving you a substantial amount of work experience that is recognised within your degree title. Many organisations offer placement opportunities and they are a great way of developing your employability skills whilst getting a flavour of a particular working environment. Placement years generally last between 9-12 months and are often aimed at penultimate year undergraduates.

Whilst on a placement or study abroad year, you will remain in full contact with York and be supported by all the services offered to students on campus. If you have a year abroad at another university, you will also be supported by the equivalent services at the host university. Worldwide travel insurance is offered for free to all students on study abroad programmes through our university business travel cover.

In order to support care experienced students with a placement or study abroad year, the university will provide you with a free, secure space for you to store your belongings. We will confirm these details during the process of applying.

### FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON FUNDING, BURSARIES AND GRANTS CAN BE FOUND HERE:

- UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/finance/student-finance-england/finance-independent-students>
- Buttle UK can provide financial help to young people who receive no support from their parents or guardians: [www.buttleuk.org/need-support/young-people#help](http://www.buttleuk.org/need-support/young-people#help)
- Turn 2 Us Grant Search: <https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk>
- The charity Stand Alone has created a detailed guide to financial support for estranged students: [www.standalone.org.uk/guides/student-guide](http://www.standalone.org.uk/guides/student-guide)
- Coram Voice: [coramvoice.org.uk/myrights/i-am-care-leaver](http://coramvoice.org.uk/myrights/i-am-care-leaver)
- Become Factsheets for Care Leavers: [www.becomecharity.org.uk/for-young-people/care-factsheets](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/for-young-people/care-factsheets)

## Care Experienced Student Comments

“ The support given is not only financial it's also emotional and mental, it gives as much as it can, it's whether or not you choose to accept it, believe me it's worth it.”

“ Student advisers at the university are acutely aware of the challenges faced by estranged students. They are committed to ensuring that these do not stand in the way of estranged students achieving their full potential. There is a genuine desire within the staff body for students to flourish and succeed.”

“ The support I've received from the Uni during my 2 and a half years here has changed everything for me – in first year, I spent the majority of time alone in my room and struggling with the emotional and financial burdens of studying at university without parental support. Thankfully, this all changed in 2nd year and here I am not only with a group of people that are in similar situations as myself but with the funding to be able to actually do things that I enjoy whilst studying here. I really can't thank those in student services enough!”

“ I think that the support that the university have given me goes above and beyond their job description, not only taking a huge weight off my own shoulders but giving advice for my brother who attends a completely different uni. Helping me get full benefits financially has also helped me focus more on my academic work and my own well being.”

“ The university offers a variety of support for estranged students, although the financial support has been very helpful over the past two years, there is so much more on offer. Over the last couple of years, I have been invited to various outings which the university provide which is really kind. However, I am a busy student nurse and cannot always attend these unfortunately, I have met with staff from the team when I've been struggling just for a coffee. Chatting with someone has really helped as friends are not always around. This has given me the confidence to open up to people and share my problems.”

“ Having a dedicated contact for care leavers really made me feel warmly welcomed to the university. I believe that having this contact is a huge contributing factor as to why I love York. It means I have someone to talk to who is aware of the help I am entitled to and I don't have to explain my past for them to understand my point of view.”



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