



Collaborative Care Leaver Covenant

2024-25

Your higher education journey

Introduction

Welcome to Go Higher West Yorkshire's (GHWY) collaborative Care Leaver Covenant, which has been designed to support you on your journey into Higher Education (HE).

We are a partnership of 13 HE providers that represent a huge range of higher education options, from universities and HE-in-FE provision, to a specialist training provider and conservatoire.

Our resource outlines the support our member institutions offer to care-experienced people in terms of HE access, success in HE, and progression (succeeding) after HE.

It also includes a 'Your Career' graphic, which identifies routes into HE depending on your level of education; the story of a care leaver's HE journey; Top Tips and Useful Links for you to find out more about support that is available from a range of organisations, including UCAS and the Become charity. It concludes with a comprehensive glossary that explains terms used in this resource and throughout HE.

The Care Leaver Covenant is a part of the Government's strategy to help individuals leaving care to live independently. It enables any organisation to pledge their support for care leavers aged 16-25.

Depending on your life stage, you may find it useful to read and talk through the document with a friend or trusted adult, such as a foster carer, personal advisor or teacher.

Important Information

Some of the key information in this publication remains subject to change. Please check for the latest information using the websites and other resources referred to before making any decisions.

Common definition commitment

As part of GHWY's commitment to improve the life chances of care-experienced students, all 13 of our members made a pledge to move to a common definition of 'care-experience' for those applying from 2023-24.

Instead of using multiple definitions, all of which have different criteria, members have adopted the UCAS definition* and provide support for those who can evidence they meet the following:

"You will have spent time living with foster carers under local authority care, in residential care (e.g. a children's home), looked after at home under a supervision order, or in kinship care with relatives or friends, either officially (e.g. a special guardianship order) or informally without local authority support**."

We have done this in recognition that using one common definition removes

at least one of the barriers to your HE progression, which is the confusion of trying to navigate and make sense of different definitions for access to support.

Please be aware that informal kinship care can be very difficult to evidence but our member institutions would like to try to consider your circumstances where possible. You may be able to evidence this through something such as: a letter from a local authority social worker; a letter from a school/college who can evidence your situation; any evidence of relevant benefits paid to your carer.

[Find out more about our commitment.](#)

* www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/ucas-undergraduate-care-experienced-students

**Kinship care is where you live full-time or most of the time with a relative or close family friend, usually because your parents are not able to care for you. You can find out more here: <https://compass.kinship.org.uk/advice-and-information/what-is-kinship-care/>



Benefits of HE

There are numerous benefits to studying in HE and we look at some of the main ones below.

Higher level skills can be beneficial throughout your life. There are many ways to achieve higher levels skills, as demonstrated through the range of qualification types, modes of study and learning environments available across GHWY's broad range of HE providers. Your options could include studying anything from a practical Higher National Certificate, through to a full-time three or four-year undergraduate course.

Increased earning potential: Graduates have an advantage in the job market and are likely to earn more money over their lifetime than non-graduates. They are also more likely to remain employed.

Take part in extra-curricular activities: Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities during their time in HE. These include clubs and societies, part-time student jobs, and volunteering opportunities. These provide the chance to build skills, provide social opportunities, and enhance their future employability.



Transferable skills: Students develop many transferable skills at HE that suit a range of jobs. These include time and project management; communication skills; and problem solving.

Become an expert in your favourite subject: Over the three or four years of undergraduate study, students will become an expert in their chosen subject. They will be able to choose a number of specialist areas of study as their interests develop.

Health, wellbeing and resilience: Research shows that graduates can be more resilient and cope better with life's challenges than non-graduates. It has also found that graduates tend to be happier and more satisfied with their lives than non-graduates.

Social benefits: Students get to work and socialise with people from a diverse range of backgrounds throughout their time in HE. As a result, many will graduate with a strong network of friends, mentors and industry contacts.

[Find out more about the benefits of HE.](#)

Support offered collaboratively

Getting into Higher Education

Training and resources for carers: Carers may be your main source of support and influence, which is why we have developed our certified Care to Go Higher CPD programme to help them to help you make informed choices.

What support we offer: Our website features up-to-date profiles on most of our 13 member institutions and what support they offer to care-experienced individuals, including bespoke campus tours and financial support. Find out more: www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/?s=what+support+we+offer

Disabled Learners' HE Transition Pack: If you've received SEND support or adjustments at FE, the transition to HE can be confusing and hard to navigate. We've produced a Transition Pack to help support you on your educational journey. Find out more: www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/resource/disabled-learners-transition-pack

Connecting carers to HE: Our monthly Beyond Care e-newsletter connects foster carers, personal advisors, and other relevant individuals to HE through relevant activities and news stories that aim to inspire, inform and support your education choices.

Succeeding in Higher Education

Sharing ideas and successes: Our members work together to share what has worked well and develop new ideas to support the success

of care experienced students.

Student participation opportunities: We welcome the involvement of care-experienced students in our outreach work, including student stories and speaking at events.

Increasing staff awareness: Our free e-training course helps HE staff to support you by raising awareness of some of the barriers you may have faced and the support that is available.

Succeeding after Higher Education

Employer links: Our members have excellent links with local employers, creating opportunities for us to champion the skills and potential of care-experienced individuals in the workplace.

Inclusive recruitment: We inputted into Yorkshire Universities' Inclusive Recruitment Guide, which advises business on how to recruit from diverse backgrounds and support individuals in the workplace Find out more: <https://gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/helping-employers-to-recruit-a-diverse-workforce/>

Collaborative networks: Representatives drawn from across our members attend a Care-Experienced and Estranged Students Network, which shares best practice.

Careers information: Our website contains lots of useful information about how to research careers, sectors that are recruiting in your local area, and much more. Find out more: www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/resources/student-learners/labour-market

Support offered by our members

success in Higher Education (HE) and beyond.

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OUR DECLARATION

We, Go Higher West Yorkshire, recognise that individuals from a care-experienced background can face additional challenges as they move through their higher education journey. All parts of society have a responsibility to support care-experienced individuals so that they can make a successful transition into adulthood. We hereby make a commitment to help improve the life chances of care-experienced individuals by widening their access to and supporting their success across all forms of higher education.

Support offered by HE providers	Bradford College	University of Bradford	University Centre Calderdale College	University of Huddersfield	Kirklees College	University of Leeds	Leeds Arts University	Leeds Beckett University	Leeds College of Building	Leeds Conservatoire	University Centre Leeds	Leeds Trinity University	University Centre Wakefield
GETTING INTO HIGHER EDUCATION													
Dedicated care leaver website	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Experiences on campus	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Application support	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Contextual admissions*	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
HEP acts as guarantor**						✓					✓		
Uses UCAS definition of care-experience***	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SUCCEEDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION													
Wellbeing support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Named contact for care leaver students	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year round accommodation	✓	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	n/a
Support with transition to HE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Additional financial support****	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training to help staff understand care experience	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Graduations costs support				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
NNECL Quality Mark	✓	✓									✓		
SUCCEEDING AFTER HIGHER EDUCATION													
Employment support*****	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* This is when HE providers can consider additional information, such as background factors, to make decisions on individual applications and achievement to identify potential, particularly where this may not be evidenced through grades

** This is when HE providers agree to pay your rent if you are unable to pay it

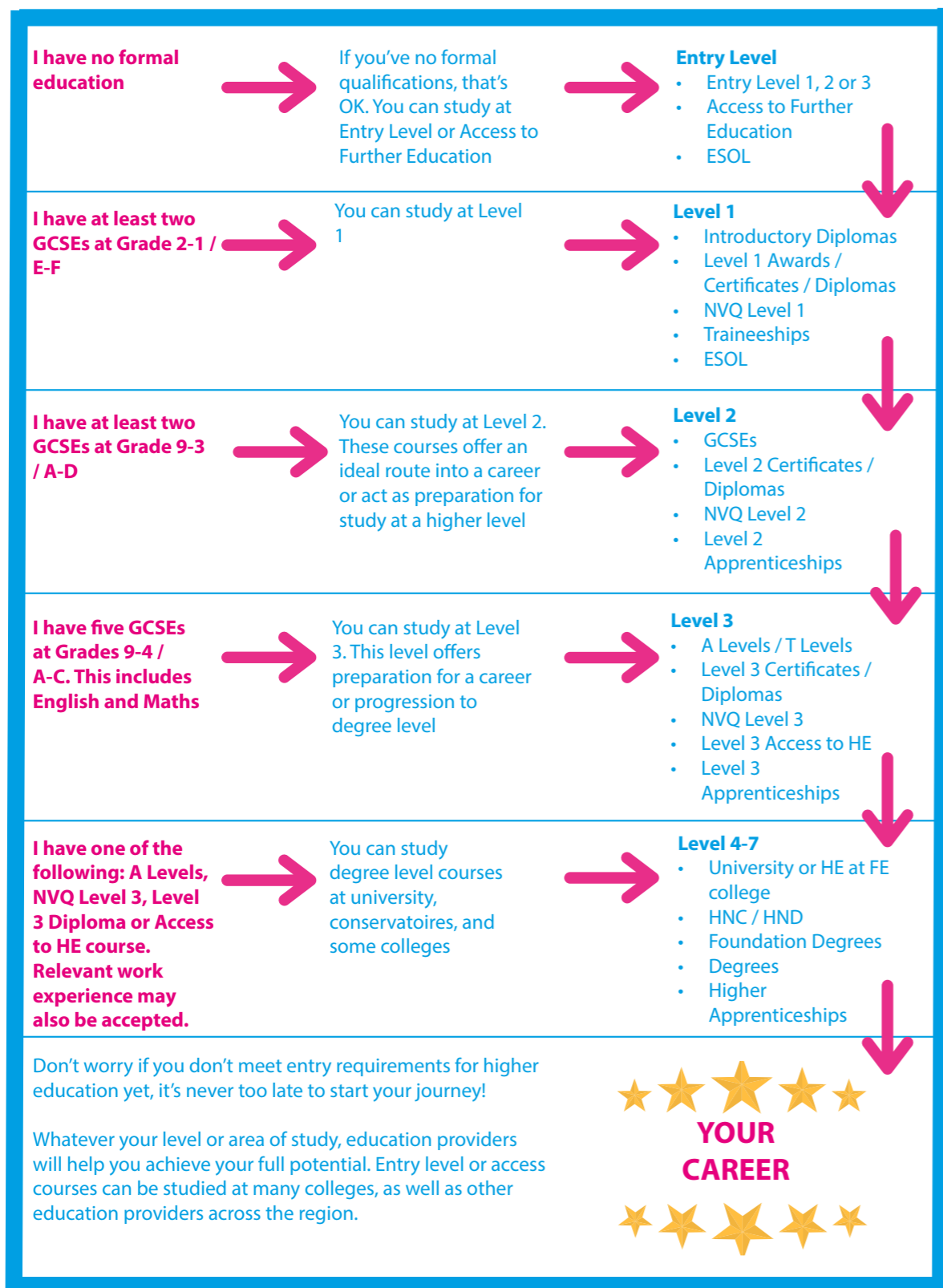
***See the 'common definition commitment' page for definition of care-experience

n/a HE provider does not own accommodation but may be able to offer support in securing somewhere to live

**** This could include bursaries, support with budgeting, or scholarships

***** This could include mock interview support and 1:1 consultations with careers advisers

Qualification routes



With credit to Bradford College

Top tips

Talk to people you trust about the benefits of Higher Education, what may be important for you to consider as a careexperienced person, and what is the best path for you.

Contact a 'care leaver contact' (sometimes referred to as a 'named contact') at one of our 13 members. They offer dedicated support to care-experienced individuals and can answer your questions and show you around campus. They can also direct you to colleagues to discuss your personal circumstances; anything from caring responsibilities to a criminal record. Find their contact details on the 'support provided by our Higher Education Providers' section of our website: www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/resources/teachers-carers-advisors/careleavers/covenant

Check what financial support is offered by your local authority to care-experienced individuals who would like to go into Higher Education. Your personal advisor should be able to help you with this

Tick the 'care experience' box when applying for courses through UCAS to ensure you have access to all the support on offer. This information will be treated in confidence, and will not affect the outcome of your application in any way.



"As a care leaver, I had all the support that I needed. There was always someone there for me whenever I needed help."

Aimee's care leaver story

My journey into Higher Education (HE) was not direct. After being moved out of my parental home at 16, I was not focused enough with my learning because I had the freedom to do as I wanted.

I decided to make a change after three years of barely attending different college courses. I completed a Level 3 qualification and when I was 21 I applied to university

My first setback happened on results day, when my grades were lower than expected. I worried that I was going to lose my university place but I received a reduced offer through the University Progression scheme. As part of this I had to attend an open day and two care leaver events that were worth UCAS points.

UCAS informed the university that I was a care leaver, and the careexperienced team emailed me within days of me accepting my offer. The team offered me lots of support with mental health, money and budgeting. They were also points of contact if I ever needed anything.

- My tips for applying to HE are:
- Never feel ashamed or like you are alone if you are care experienced - HE is a great place for support and to meet students who have similar backgrounds.
- Never get down because of your grades - there is always a way into university.
- Attend open day or applicant experience days because you get a 'feel' for the university and your chosen course.



With credit to University of Bradford

Read more unique care leaver stories on our website: www.gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/casestudytype/care-leaver

Find out more

GHWY: More details about the support offered by our 13 member institutions, as well as links to case studies and more. <https://gohigherwestyorks.ac.uk/resources/teachers-carers-advisors/care-leavers>

IMO Hub: A voice for teenagers in care and care leavers to share stories, give advice and access opportunities. www.imohub.org.uk

Become: Information and resources to help improve the lives of care experienced individuals. www.becomecharity.org.uk

Propel: A directory informing care leavers about the support available from HE providers across the UK. www.propel.org.uk

Learning & Work Institute: Information to help care leavers make decisions about education and work. www.learningandwork.org.uk/what-we-do/social-justice-inclusion/care-leavers

Prospects: Careers advice including a skills quiz, with information on study options and work experience. www.prospects.ac.uk

Discover Uni: A resource to help individuals decide about their HE choices and compare courses. www.discoveruni.org.uk

Not Going to Uni: Training and development opportunities, including degree apprenticeships and HE at colleges. www.notgoingtouni.co.uk

UCAS: Portal for individuals applying to university, including finance information and career options. www.ucas.com

West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA): Information about jobs and working in the Leeds City Region. www.futuregoals.co.uk

NNECL Quality Mark: Find out which universities and colleges have demonstrated their support for the inclusion and success of care experienced students. A number of our members are in the process of being accredited. www.nnecl.org

The Rees Foundation: Support and guidance for care-experienced individuals, including offering social spaces. <https://www.reesfoundation.org/>

From Us To Us: A booklet that contains advice from care-experienced graduates to care-experienced people who are approaching graduation, or have recently graduated themselves. www.drzoebaker.co.uk/currentoutputs

Future Goals provides careers and education inspiration and support as well as free upskilling courses for all ages across Leeds City Region. www.futuregoals.co.uk

Glossary of Higher Education terms

Access to Higher Education is a diploma that prepares students (usually aged 19+) who do not have traditional qualifications to study in higher education. Find out more: www.accesstohe.ac.uk

Apprenticeship - A paid job where the employee learns and gains valuable experiences through on-the-job training, supplemented with 20% of their time completing classroom or distance learning with a college, university or training provider. It leads to a nationally recognised qualification.

Conservatoire (or Conservatory) is an institution that specialises in the performing arts. The programmes they offer focus on practical learning and performance.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a combination of ideas, approaches, and techniques that will help individuals manage their own learning and growth

Entry Level qualifications provide learners with an introduction to education. They are designed for people who do not feel ready for GCSEs, or equal qualifications, or have not studied in a long time. They are offered in a wide range of subjects including Mathematics and Computer Science

Foundation degree is a combined academic and vocational qualification that is the equivalent of two-thirds of a Bachelor degree or a Higher National Diploma (HND)

Further Education (FE) refers to any education after secondary school that is not an undergraduate or postgraduate degree (e.g. A-levels).

Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) is a partnership of 13 Higher Education Providers that works to achieve common goals on access to, success in and progression from HE for those from under-represented groups. Refer to the back page for a full list of our members

Graduate - a person who has successfully completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded an undergraduate or first academic degree.

Higher Education (HE) takes place at universities and Further Education colleges and normally includes undergraduate and postgraduate study.

HE-in-FE - Many FE colleges offer a wide range of HE programmes. These might appeal to people who want to stay close to their home to study, or want to continue studying at the FE college they have already attended. Applications are usually made directly to the institution.

Higher Education Provider (HEP) is any institution that provides higher education qualifications, including universities and other approved organisations. Applications are usually made through UCAS.

Higher National Certificate (HNC) is a vocational, work-related Higher Education qualification that prepares students for a particular job and/or career. It is equivalent to the first year of a degree.

Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) is an alternative to apprenticeships or degrees. It has been developed in partnership with businesses to ensure learners get the specific training and skills they need for their chosen careers.

National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) is a registered charity dedicated to transforming the educational outcomes of individuals with experience of being in care.

Specialist training providers offer 60% or more of their courses in one or two subjects.

T Levels are technical-based qualifications that have been developed in collaboration with employers and businesses. They are broadly equivalent to 3 A Levels.

Undergraduate (or Bachelor) degrees are an academic step up from A-levels (or their equivalent). They are typically completed at a university or other higher education institution.

Universities are institutions of higher education where people can study for degrees in several academic disciplines. They also carry out academic research.

University Centres offer Higher Education courses in a Further Education setting.



"[My HE provider's] support network for me as a care leaver is amazing. Every time I have an issue, even non-academic, I know I can reach out to someone."



GO HIGHER

WEST YORKSHIRE

Bradford College

 UNIVERSITY of
BRADFORD

 UNIVERSITY
CENTRE
Calderdale College

University of
Huddersfield
Inspiring global professionals

 **KIRKLEES**
COLLEGE

 **LEEDS**
CONSERVATOIRE

 UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

 **LEEDS**
ARTS
UNIVERSITY
1846

 **LEEDS**
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

 **Leeds**
College of
Building

 **University**
Centre Leeds

 **Leeds Trinity**
University

 **University Centre**
at the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group
