



## Care Experienced Student Support Student Money and Accommodation Advice

Starting university is a new adventure for anyone.

We understand that as a student who has experienced being in care you may have circumstances or concerns that might be different from other students.

At London Met we are committed to providing you with as much support as possible to help you adapt to university life and this information sheet provides an overview of the financial and pastoral support package you may expect to receive.

We recognise that you may not need, or want, any extra support but it's important to know what you are entitled to, especially when you are still thinking about applying, settling into a new course or the daunting prospect of a new place to live.

Sometimes, it can just be easier to know that there is one person who can point you in the right direction to ensure this process is as simple and supportive as possible. As named contact for care leavers I am keen to make sure your individual needs are met and I'm here to help prior and throughout your course, as and when you need, starting right now!

Whether it's just for a chat or to share any concerns, please contact me and I will treat any questions you have confidentially and will only refer to other departments or agencies with your permission.

We hope to make sure that studying here is as enjoyable and uncomplicated as possible.

Best Wishes

Neil Parsons  
Student Adviser and Named Contact for Care Leavers  
London Metropolitan University  
[careleaver@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:careleaver@londonmet.ac.uk)



## **Who is a 'Care Leaver'?**

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 defines a care leaver as a young person who has been in the care of a local authority for at least 13 weeks including at the time of their 16th birthday.

## **What if I don't meet the full requirements?**

In order to receive university support and advice, London Met students do not have to meet the full legal requirements of a care leaver, and/or can simply identify as 'care-experienced'. We encourage these students to still declare as a Care Leaver upon registration with the University (even if they didn't do so via their UCAS application).

London Met understands the specific challenges you may face as a Care Leaver. We offer a personalised support package covering money, accommodation and pastoral support.

A series of information sheets are available to our students (some of which are referred to within this document). Topics include funding available to full-time and part-time students, students with children, and student halls of residence: [www.londonmet.ac.uk/advice](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/advice)

## **1) Student Finance England – [www.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinance)**

### **Who is a 'Care Leaver' with Student Finance England (SFE)?**

A young person who has been in the care of, or been given accommodation by, their local authority (LA) for a period of at least 13 weeks before the age of 16, and hasn't reconciled with their parents between leaving care and starting their course.

If you qualify as a care leaver with Student Finance England (SFE) you are automatically classified as an 'independent student'; this is important regarding the financial support you may receive.

Students won't be classed as care leavers if:

- they've been looked after by family members or legal guardians (without the involvement of their LA)
- they have a residency order
- they have been given accommodation or supported housing by a charity

Students in these situations may still be eligible to apply as an 'independent student' in other ways, for example, by showing they are estranged from their parents. Please see our Estranged Students information sheet for further details:

<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/media/london-metropolitan-university/london-met-documents/professional-service-departments/student-services/aifs/estrangedstudents.pdf>

### **What's available?**

Students leaving the care of their LA are able to apply for the same support from SFE as other students whether you are studying full-time or part-time at undergraduate or postgraduate level.

For example, as a full-time undergraduate student you are likely to be awarded the funding listed below provided you are a 'Home' student commencing your studies from September/February 2018/19, have no previous university study and have been granted 'independent status' (or have a household income of under £25,000).

Tuition Fee Loan – up to £9,250 (to be repaid)

Maintenance Loan – up to £11,354<sup>1</sup> (to be repaid)

<sup>1</sup>£12,382 if you are eligible for benefits while registered as a full-time student.

Students who are not 25 and over, or married/in a civil partnership, or do not have children are usually assessed for student finance based on the income of their biological or adoptive parents (even when living with another relative who supports them financially, such as a grandparent). However, students leaving care are generally classified by SFE as an 'independent student' meaning that a student's biological or adoptive parents' household income is not taken into account when calculating how much student finance you're entitled to receive.

### **Evidence**

Students will be asked to provide evidence that they were looked after, or have been given accommodation by, their LA. Usually this is a letter from the local council or care authority (often directly from a student's social worker or personal adviser). This letter should confirm a student:

- was under the care of their LA,
- has now left the care of the LA, and
- is a care leaver as defined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

Students only have to provide this evidence once, at the start of their course.

If a student can't provide the evidence requested, they are advised to first contact the University's specialist Care Leaver Adviser, Neil Parsons.

## **2) University funding**

**IMPORTANT:** Receipt of the Care Leavers' and London Met Bursary are conditional on you adhering to a minimum attendance rate of 75% throughout the academic year<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>Please note that for students starting in September the final rate of attendance is recorded in February. This is in regards to eligibility for the second instalment of the London Met Bursary and for the second and final instalments of the Care Leavers' Bursary. For student starting in February this data is recorded in May.

### **Care Leavers' Bursary**

London Met is pleased to offer a Care Leavers Bursary for full-time students of £1,500 for each progressive year of your undergraduate degree. This is intended to help towards course costs and basic living expenses and is usually paid in three instalments at the beginning of each term. Applications for the bursary are made automatically<sup>3</sup> when you apply for your student funding (it is important you indicate you are a Care Leaver on your SFE application and provide the necessary evidence as explained in section one of this information sheet).

Please see link for further details:

[www.londonmet.ac.uk/applying/funding-your-studies/bursaries-and-grants/care-leaver-bursary/](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/applying/funding-your-studies/bursaries-and-grants/care-leaver-bursary/)

<sup>3</sup>If you are a parent and/or live with a partner you will need to apply to the University directly. Please either email the required letter to [careleaver@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:careleaver@londonmet.ac.uk) or arrange a one-to-one appointment with our specialist Care Leaver Adviser Neil Parsons.

### **London Met Bursary - Four-Year Extended Degrees**

Applications for the London Met Bursary are processed automatically when you apply for your

funding through SFE as a full-time or part-time Student<sup>4</sup>.

£1,000 cash bursaries are available to full-time students (studying 120 credits) who meet the criteria starting in year 0 on an extended degree from 2018/19. A further £1,000 bursary is available when students progress from year 0 into year 1. A pro-rata bursary is also available to part-time students who meet the criteria for both bursaries, for example, £500 available to a student enrolled on modules worth 60 credits.

Please see link for further details.

[www.londonmet.ac.uk/applying/funding-your-studies/bursaries-and-grants/extended-degree-support/](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/applying/funding-your-studies/bursaries-and-grants/extended-degree-support/)

<sup>4</sup>To be assessed for both bursary schemes as a full-time or part-time student you will need to be eligible and apply for the maximum amount of Maintenance Loan available through SFE. Please ensure you do not untick the box on your SFE application which states you 'consent to share your bursary data with your university' if you wish to be considered.

### **Hardship Support Fund**

Available during both term-time and the summer period<sup>5</sup> this fund is intended to help students who are facing particular financial difficulty to remain on their course. Care Leavers are treated as priority applicants and whilst there is no guarantee of a successful application, we strongly recommend you apply. Please see link for further details:

<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/hardship-fund/>

<sup>5</sup>Year on year funding is dependent on future budget availability and is not guaranteed.

### **3) Additional funding**

As a Care Leaver studying in Higher Education often your registered Local Authority will provide a Higher Education Bursary of £2,000 towards your first year of study. Please speak to your Local Authority or Social worker / personal adviser for more information about available support or contact our specialist Care Leaver Adviser Neil Parsons to assist you<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup>Please note that due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), company/individual consent to share may be required to exchange information.

Please see below for contact details of your registered Local Authority within and outside London:

- within London <http://directory.londoncouncils.gov.uk/>
- outside London <http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>

### **4) Accommodation**

London Met understands the importance of a regular fixed address when focusing on your studies. We will work with you to help you find suitable accommodation and also assist you in arranging accommodation for 365 days of the year.

More information can be found at [www.londonmet.ac.uk/accommodation](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/accommodation)

### **5) Pastoral support**

Our specialist Care Leaver Adviser Neil Parsons is available via email, telephone and one-to-one

appointments. In addition to assisting you with funding from SFE and checking you are receiving all the financial support available to you, he may also use your pathway plan and work in partnership with your Social Worker/personal adviser to coordinate the best arrangements, and support, to suit your needs. He can also advise on any other concerns you may have and will be able to effectively refer you internally or externally.

Students are also notified of Care Leaver workshops throughout the year and provided with opportunities to attend external events such as motivational speaking, presentations, careers, improving study skills, work experience placements and away days.

### **Additional support and resources**

**Become** — Become is a voice and a champion for young people in the UK living in care. They believe, as we do, that every care experienced young person should receive the support, encouragement and opportunities to enjoy life and achieve. [www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk)

**Buttle UK** — Buttle UK offer grant programmes which have been helping children and young people in need across the UK since 1953. [www.buttleuk.org](http://www.buttleuk.org)

**Coram Voice** — Coram Voice enables and equips children and young people to hold to account the services that are responsible for their care. [www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk)

**Drive Forward Foundation** — Drive Forward have been changing the lives of care leavers since 1993 and offer CV and interview skills as well as access to a professional network of entrepreneurs and professionals from almost every industry to open your eyes to different career paths and ways to succeed. [www.driveforwardfoundation.com](http://www.driveforwardfoundation.com)

**Samaritans** — 24 hours a day the Samaritans provide emotional support for people who are struggling to cope. Telephone: 116 123. To visit their website go to: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **How to contact me**

Telephone your Student Hub and ask to book an appointment with Neil Parsons:

Aldgate Hub – 020 7133 7002; Holloway Hub – 020 7133 7001; Moorgate Hub – 020 7133 7003

Email: [careleaver@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:careleaver@londonmet.ac.uk)

Website: [www.londonmet.ac.uk/advice](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/advice)

The Social Security Fraud Act 2001

Student Money and Accommodation Advice reminds all clients who may be in receipt of benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and/or Local Authority of the need to disclose to the DWP/Local Authority any relevant changes of circumstances and of the need for clients to make full and accurate disclosure of all the relevant facts to the DWP and/or Local Authority.

The content of this information sheet has been compiled using information from external sources, as well as University data. The content has been carefully checked and is given in good faith. However, the University cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any inaccuracy. July 2018