

**BECOME.**

THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

# Supporting care-experienced students to and through higher education

**Sam Turner, Voice and Influencing Manager**

June 2019

# Outline

- About Become
- The Propel website
- Care leavers in HE – what do we know?
- 5 key messages for foster carers
- Questions and discussion

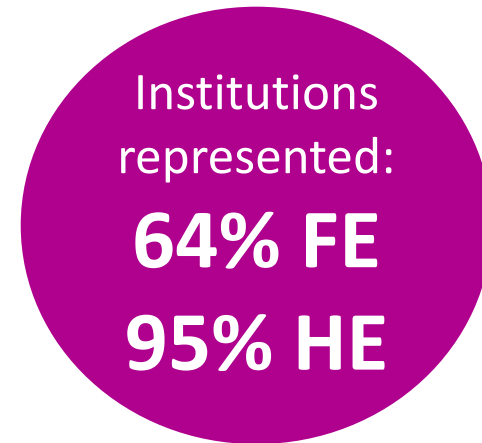
# About Become

- We provide help, support and advice to young people in care and young care leavers so that they can unleash their potential and take control of their lives.
- We help make the care system work better by ensuring that young people's voices and perspectives shape policy and service provision.



# The Propel website

- Every year we contact HE and FE providers across the UK and ask them about their HE provision for care-experienced students.
- We put all of this information onto [propel.org.uk](https://propel.org.uk) to support care leavers who are considering their next steps.



## The University of Salford

[← Search](#)

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The University of Salford is proud that for more than 10 years we have been at the forefront of supporting our care leaver students, working in partnership with local authorities and other organisations to provide great support.

We pride ourselves on being a friendly, accessible university. Some of our staff work nationally to make sure that care leavers have all the support they need in place to access and succeed in higher education.

If you are deciding which university is right for you, we run many events, often in collaboration with other local universities and local authorities, to ensure you have all the right information to make the right choices, so get in contact and we can tell you what is happening.

We can also arrange a visit just for you to have a look around, meet other care leavers at uni and check out the support on offer.

Throughout your time with us we will keep in contact with you – you are always welcome to come and see Jane and Arron, the care leaver team, about anything and confidentially.

We offer flexible accommodation, for 52 weeks a year if needed, specialised counselling and wellbeing services, help for students with families, support for asylum seekers, careers and employability, disability and learning support, support for caring, homelessness – anything really!

We also encourage all our care leavers to either volunteer to mentor other care-experienced young people at local secondary schools, so you can help them follow in your footsteps, or work as a paid student ambassador at events for other young people, where you can share your knowledge and experience.

After graduation you have priority in getting a paid internship at the university, so you don't have to leave your fantastic uni experience behind. Whatever questions you may have, we are here to help, so just ask!



### Support we offer ?

- ✓ A named contact
- ✓ Outreach sessions or activities
- ✓ Pre-application help
- ✓ Guidance for offer holders
- ✓ A web page for care leavers
- ✓ Careers advice and support after graduation



### 365 Accommodation we offer ?

- ✓ A place to live all year round
- ✓ If not, help finding somewhere to live for the whole year

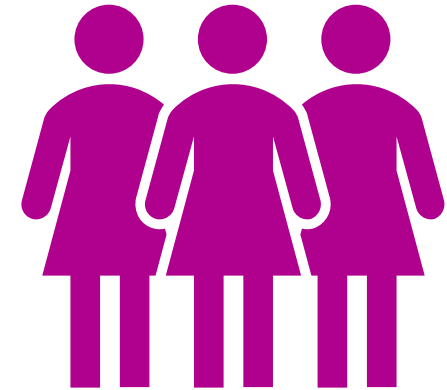


### £ Funding support we offer ?

- ✓ Specific funding that's just for care leavers
- ✓ Additional funding available (such as bursaries and grants)
- ✓ Support for students seeking asylum
- ✓ Support for those with discretionary leave to remain
- ✓ Financial advice

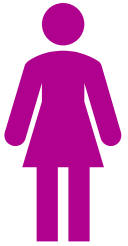
# Definitions

- **Care leaver** – someone who was in care on their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and has spent more than 13 weeks in care since the age of 14.
- **Care-experienced** – a wider definition which includes anyone who has any experience of being in care (e.g. including those who may have been adopted or returned to live with their birth family).



# Care leavers in higher education (HE)

Care-experienced learners in HE are more likely to...



be or identify as female



begin their courses later (often as mature students)



not be UK nationals



study part-time



declare a disability

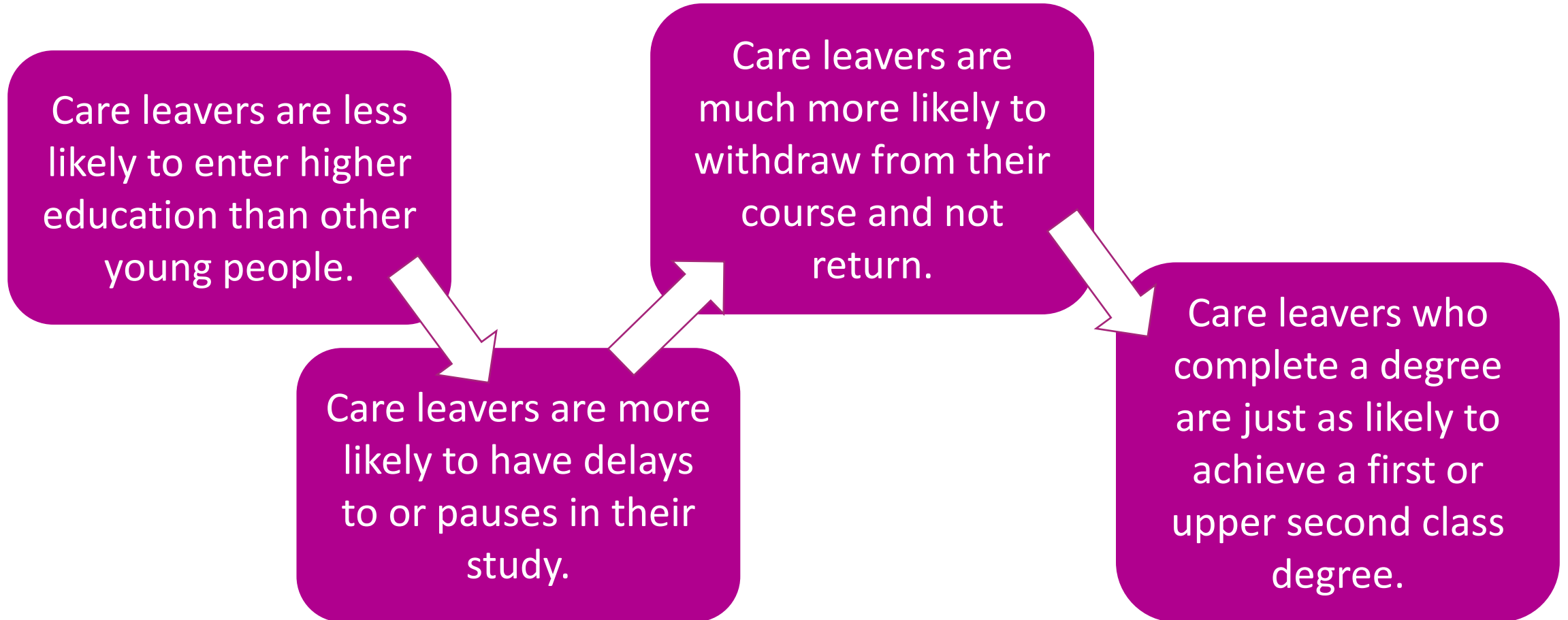


have studied qualifications other than A Levels



study HE at an FE College

# What do we know?





# Available support

## Local authority

- Virtual School and PEP.
- Personal advisor and pathway plan as care leaver.
- £2000 higher education bursary.
- Accommodation during vacation periods.

## University or college

- Designated named contact.
- Additional funding (e.g. bursaries).
- Year-round accommodation.
- Disability and mental health support.
- Outreach and advice.

# Five top tips for foster carers and other supporters

# 1. Start the conversation early

- Open up an early dialogue about future aspirations and expectations – these might not match.
- HE doesn't have to happen right now or in the way you/they expect; explore the diversity of HE options.
- Discuss disclosure and identity as a care-experienced person at university (and during application).



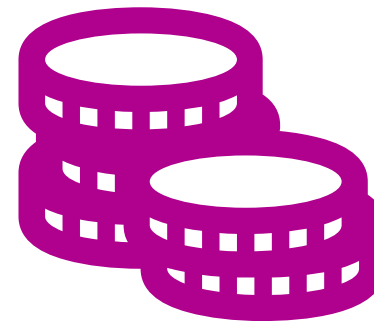
## 2. Research and reach out

- Speak to outreach and ‘widening participation’ teams at local universities.
- Get in touch with named contacts and find out what different universities and colleges offer (see **Propel**).
- Talk to local authority and Virtual School.
- Seek out opportunities with charities.
- Join different programmes (e.g. Sutton Trust and university summer schools).



# 3. Support applications

- Tick the box on the UCAS form.
- Contextualised admissions and variable offers.
- Apply early for student finance as an independent student – household income will not be assessed and proof of status required only once from the local authority.
- Disabled Students' Allowances.
- Remember late applications, Clearing and Adjustment.



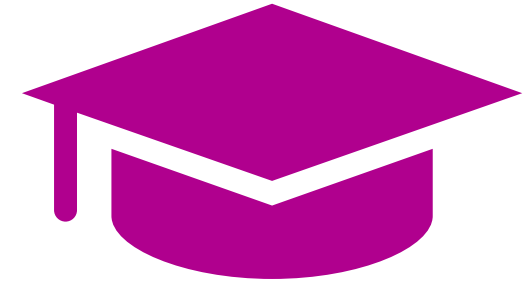
## 4. Consider accommodation

- Speak with local authority about availability of accommodation and cost if not Staying Put.
- Benefits of staying in local area and living in familiar place, but potential isolation for students living at home.
- Year-round accommodation available for care leavers – look at [Unite Foundation](#) too.



## 5. Plan for transition and ongoing support

- Talk to the local authority leaving care team about available support and transition processes.
- Navigating disability/mental health support services from LA, NHS, university etc.
- Paperwork and lag time (e.g. payment of HE bursary).
- Involvement of personal advisor.
- Financial management and independent living skills.



# Sources of support and funding

- [Become](#) – free Care Advice Service, life coaching, factsheets and more
- [NNECL](#)
- [The Care Leavers' Association](#)
- [The Rees Foundation](#)
- [Capstone Care Leavers Trust](#)
- [The Care Leavers' Foundation](#)
- [The Unite Foundation](#)
- [Coram Voice](#)
- [Drive Forward Foundation](#)



# Final tips

- Sign up for the [UCAS Parent newsletter](#).
- Look at [‘Helping you reach higher’ factsheet](#).
- All data on care-experienced learners and care leavers in higher education from this presentation comes from the work of Dr Neil Harrison at the Rees Centre, University of Oxford. See [Moving on Up: Pathways of care leavers and care-experienced students into and through higher education](#) (NNECL, 2017).

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