

College, University and Partners response to COVID-19 in the support of Care-Experienced Students

Colleges

Recommendations from the Become at al survey	1. Reducing financial hardship.	2. Boosting wellbeing and support.	3. Preventing homelessness.	4. Ensuring academic continuity.
Borders College	<p>Borders College has advertised the discretionary fund with a few CE students accessing the fund. They were offered a quick response with a fairly straightforward process for evidence through to payment.</p> <p>All students will be notified of their need to apply for UC at the end of their course.</p>	<p>The Student Services Team has been working to keep engaged with students regularly by using texts, calls, Teams, Zoom.</p> <p>We also have a dedicated Facebook page for students to access which allows us to share information.</p>	<p>Not applicable for Borders College.</p>	<p>We have issued laptops to students who have required them. We have been able to make payments to students struggling with Wi-Fi and issue them with regular payments to allow them to access mobile data.</p> <p>Learning Support team has continued to engage with students where required through Teams, calls, etc. to ensure they continue to be supported.</p>
Edinburgh College	<p>Edinburgh College regard care-experienced and estranged students as priority groups when it comes to making applications to the college's FE and HE Discretionary</p>	<p>CE key contacts on each campus, Learning Support if they have disclosed an ASN, their LDT.</p> <p>The Learning Support Team have been sending out weekly survival guides to all students (happy to forward on an example).</p> <p>Details on CE Facebook page how students can</p>	<p>Looking to see if it will be possible for students over the summer in college, if not will look to our partners to see if we can agree a way to access their accommodation.</p>	<p>Prior to the lockdown approx. 30 students were identified as needing support with IT. Students can apply to the Discretionary Fund for money to secure a loan computer through charity Passion – this is a</p>

	<p>Funds.</p> <p>Our students will continue to receive the CE Bursary until the end of term and as our students then cease to be a college student until they enrol on their next course, they are able to apply for UC.</p>	<p>access support.</p> <p>Wellbeing Team have a big presence on college's social media platforms and have been posting weekly updates with coping tips and strategies. Students can access Wellbeing support and receive support online/telephone with the college's Wellbeing Adviser.</p> <p>Counselling Team have moved to online/virtual appointments depending on student preference.</p> <p>Corporate Parent lead has been in close contact with partner Throughcare, Social Work, Champs Board to offer support and continue to support students</p> <p>Students in the accommodation are contacted on a weekly basis by one of the key contacts and the Accommodation Manager visits 2 mornings every week and checks in on all students and is aware of those students who are CE</p> <p>CE students who have been identified as particularly isolated are receiving weekly zoom catchups.</p>	<p>Good practice examples of supporting students who need summer accommodation who may no longer be EC students as moving onto pastures new.</p>	<p>straightforward application and the student is guaranteed the funds.</p>
<p>Newbattle Abbey College</p>	<p>All students have access to our hardship fund for discretionary payments.</p>	<p>Vulnerable students are being contacted personally (phone) by our Support for Learning tutors.</p>	<p>Students can still stay on campus and can access hardship funds if necessary.</p>	<p>In addition to providing online resources/support and teaching (Zoom) unit tutors and guidance tutors are following up with each student on an individual basis (all students). A portfolio of evidence (for each student) is being pulled together to back up professional judgement considering the new guidelines from the SQA.</p>

<p>Fife College</p>	<p>Care Experienced Bursaries have continued throughout the closure. In addition the Batchelor Trust offered hardship grants for any students from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly care leavers.</p> <p>Employability Advisors – have continued to offer support to all students with employability skills, advice and guidance as well as promoting employment vacancies including those from employers which are urgent and immediate opportunities. The team post regular daily check-ins and motivational posts to encourage engagement and a positive presence.</p>	<p>The Guidance team and the college Health and Well-being Adviser actively post on all platforms information relating to looking after your health and well-being including physical health. Detailed hints and tips which can be accessed on the dedicated page on our website as well as on a blog and podcast.</p> <p>Help and advice is available via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance staff • Students Association • Inclusion • Employability • Funding • We Care at Fife (Corporate parenting) <p>We have made contact with all of our CE students regarding the advice line and counselling services also provided by Who Cares? Scotland.</p> <p>We Care at Fife promotes positive engagement and motivational information and support. On a monthly basis we host a Show We Care Day and have continued with this via social media.</p>	<p>The Guidance Team liaise with the local authority and charity organisations that assist individuals with homelessness and we are also on hand to help with hardship payments.</p>	<p>The Fife College digital team delivered laptops and Wi-Fi connectivity to our students who needed them across the region.</p> <p>Each student has a named contact/lecturer working closely with them to make sure they have the information and support needed.</p> <p>Our website also has helpful information and links to help access College services from home.</p> <p>All students have access to the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing Office 365 • MyDesktop • Microsoft Teams • iLearn • Student Portal <p>Our 'Studying from Home' campaign has been running since the College closure. This covers our reassuring messages, continued engagement, and support we provide.</p>
----------------------------	--	---	--	--

<p>Glasgow Clyde College</p> <p>(Action for children STAY services has engaged with 25 students intensively and around 25 light touch. The STAY Mentor works within Advice and Guidance and has supported students with a variety of critical support areas successfully in partnership with the college staff)</p>	<p>The College has been able to offer additional hardship funding for students to alleviate some of the challenges presented by COVID-19. This will allow students to be funded to the end of the AY where need has been proven. Action for Children were also able to support Young people with Emergency funding for Wellbeing, utility, and connectivity support. All students who requested support received a food parcel to include toiletries and other necessary items. All who accessed the emergency support received either vouchers to the value of £25. Further support was made available of financial assistance via bank transfer up to the value of £120 per week per family for the last six weeks. New funding is currently being offered to boost support. Some students have been identified as needing connectivity items and WIFI and this has been</p>	<p>Multiple measures have been put in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of the Big White Wall to support student wellbeing and provide resources and peer support • Additional student counselling sessions made available • Introduction of a student Mental Health helpline • Development of dedicated MHW area for students • Mental health related webinars for staff and students <p>Action for Children has provided continuous wellbeing check in support and home visits using social distance measures. Along with the caseload held by AfC, the staff member has undertaken increased mental wellness check in calls with students recognised as needing additional support during this difficult period.</p> <p>To ensure the Young person has a safe space to discuss thoughts and feelings along with offering encouragement and understanding, the Mentor has identified the support being offered has supported the reduction of loneliness isolation by responding to needs with speed and flexibility.</p>	<p>Staff continue to support individuals who identify / are referred as vulnerable and staff will act as advisers and advocates where required to provide the necessary support and signposting that will ensure wider welfare. The Student Advice team have been working closely with the funding team to ensure any students who require additional hardship funding can be supported where possible.</p> <p>STAY mentoring service has also supported and been a pivotal part of the link with external agencies and carried out a lot of the family negotiations when relationships break down. Staff has provided a listening ear and has contacted various services and successfully reduced risk. The regular check in calls enables the college services to receive a regular update and</p>	<p>The process of assessment and certification is finally coming to conclusion after a sustained period of engagement from teaching staff. This has allowed students to continue their academic journey albeit on a remote basis. Decision on progression for academic session 20/21 are being finalised to ensure that continuing students have a clear understanding of what the new delivery will look like, whilst those who are not able to progress with their course of choice are suitably supported into a positive destination by College staff and external agencies as appropriate. STAY services has been very proactive in engaging with students and supporting journey planning to minimise the risk of becoming NEET. This is works very well with the student services internally and externally to maximise choices and chances that are realistic and robust. AfC staff through regular TEAMS meetings or telephone calls, are able to support decision making and with making applications for destinations.</p>
--	--	--	--	---

	supported with chrome books to keep, and Dongle access. This additional support has been welcomed by students and the college recognise the impact the service has and will continue to make.		monitor situational changes that require reactive interventions.	
City of Glasgow College (Action for Children STAY service Mentor has engaged with 28 intensive supports and around 40 additional interventions over the year.)	Advice and Guidance has maintained regular communication with CE students to offer financial support. Also, providing information on access to Benefits once course is completed. CE students prioritised for applications. Examples of support include costs related to housing and IT connectivity. Action for Children has offered a top up on this support via emergency funding of Wellbeing packs and Financial input along with support for Chrome notebooks and Dongles.	Advice and guidance are in regular contact and is working with one of our CE students to facilitate a weekly CE peer support session which has been offered out to all CE students. Regular communication has included updates/support/events from other organisations such as the WCS Share “The Love Event” and the Make It Your Own project. The Counselling Service was quick to move to telephone counselling when college closed. CE students who have been accessing counselling have been offered telephone counselling or a check in appointment with one of the counsellors. Updated our information on the website to include COVID-related issues: Action for Children provide regular telephone support along with what we offer and reports back to the team on any concerns.	Paid rent costs for some students. HE CE students have been encouraged to apply to SAAS for the CE Accommodation grant which launched early in April. Additional Discretionary Fund payments provided to other CE students. Supported some students to access external support such as Simon Community and Shelter. AFC also carry out some of the ground work through connecting with agencies and acting as advocate, where necessary.	Students are contacted by their lecturers regularly. Students encouraged to attend online classes and continue to submit assessments. Students who work with Learning Support have been engaging with them online through different platforms. AFC connect with students as a buffer to discuss any ongoing issues that are preventing them from learning and encourage the student to re-engage. This is in addition to the current impact that the college makes and has shown to be beneficial
Glasgow Kelvin College	STAY has had a positive impact on the Care Experience students and young carers in the College. The traditional response within the wider college for these students is mainly through the Advice, Guidance and Learner Support Team where students have a named contact and multiple layers of support are offered to students –accessing internal and external funds, advocacy work, working with homeless support charities, for example, Night Stop, to name a few areas. The Action for Children Worker has become an integral part of this team, proving additional community based and 1-1 support. The AFC worker shares internal records with AGLS staff, allowing the support learners receive to			

be as seamless and holistic as possible. As well as having access to staff members, the Care Experienced learners have access to college resources such as the Big White Wall which provides 24/7 support for anyone having difficulties with their mental health. Currently, the worker is connecting with over 40 care experienced students through the bug white wall.

Below are some case studies which illustrate the impact of the combined work, between the College and STAY to support our most vulnerable students

- Three learners currently enrolled on the Transitions to Learning & Work programme (a bespoke programme targeting CE younger learners) received a Chromebook through the STAY Project partnership. One young learner who has disclosed mental health difficulties was at risk of social isolation from peers and struggling with unreliable technology in her home. She was worried about being able to complete coursework to fulfil conditional offer requirements for her next level course.
- Another learner is in a kinship placement with grandparents and had chosen at the start of lockdown to move out to stay elsewhere to ensure she did not place her elderly relatives at higher risk. This learner interviewed successfully and has secured a Modern Apprenticeship during lockdown but was struggling, using only the small screen on a mobile phone to meet the conditions set of completing outstanding SQA units to secure the MA offer.
- The third learner is highly vulnerable and a request from the care team came during a meeting with social work and core group, to source a device that would allow her to re-engage with learning. All these learners are expected to return to study at Glasgow Kelvin College during the next academic year, and with blended and distance learning looking highly likely, the resources provided to the young people will make a significant difference to their ability to sustain their courses.
- A fourth learner was identified as a single parent, with significant financial hardship, health and childcare challenges that were preventing her from completing Block 3 coursework on HNC programme, again she was affected by poor connectivity at home, and was using a data package on her mobile phone to complete course work, she also had a university place secured but conditional to successful completion of the current HN programme. She received a Chromebook from AFC and was immediately able to complete and submit course work. She expressed her gratitude and explained the positive impact in an email to course tutor. She also indicated that the resource would be invaluable for her now guaranteed university place. STAY services are specifically designed to reach out to those most disadvantaged, however we are flexible and could see for the student, this need was paramount to enhance current and any future prospects. We were delighted to hear that the student has now successfully completed all academia for this year and has a positive pathway.

The fifth learner, a young Glasgow Care Leaver with a very chaotic and disadvantaged background. She has mental health issues and is socially isolated. Not long before Lockdown this learner enrolled in the project's Core Skill classes and this was huge for her as it meant she would be travelling independently three times per week, engaging with peers and challenging everything that made her feel comfortable and safe. This learner thrived in class – it was difficult for her to overcome her fears, but she did it! By the time Lockdown started she was enjoying the classes and academically and she was performing really well. At the beginning of Lockdown she engaged well with Core Skill staff via mobile phone (no technology available to her) but staff quite quickly sensed that she was slowly returning to her old ways – no outdoor activity

	<p>whatsoever, missing calls, not engaging in the paper based lessons given to her. However, since receiving the laptop this learner has had a new lease of life! She researches new resources, video calls her workers and friends, uses email, online learning and has recently been looking at Open University. Also, the online Health and Well Being resources have been invaluable to this learner, they have shown her that she is not alone. Without the laptop I am in no doubt that this learner would be disengaging with services due to lack of face to face contact and boredom. Disengaging would have had dreadful personal consequences for her. Action for children continues to look for areas where they can support students and the Lockdown period has demonstrated the levels of passion and commitment to every student and not just those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>			
<p>West College Scotland</p> <p>STAY Mentoring from Action for Children has provided support to 27 Vulnerable students from diverse backgrounds. Along with this number Lee has engaged with an additional 35 students who only needed short interventions.</p>	<p>WCS offered a hardship fund to students who had financial difficulty. In partnership with the STAY service the mentor has made regular contact with students and through AfC's wellbeing and Government Emergency funds has been able to offer support by food vouchers, Chrome notebooks, food parcels and bank transfers to support with utility bills and top up cards.</p> <p>The attendance criteria for bursary was removed to allow funding to continue to reduce negative hardship cases and ensuring the same amount of money was still readily available. This was monitored by lecturing staff for engagement and if this failed STAY Mentor and the College student Advisor</p>	<p>This area is being offered by our Wellbeing team, Student Advisory Services, Counselling Team, Safeguarding Team, Enabling Services and STAY mentors</p> <p>The Virtual "Gies a Break" Café has been running through the Wellness team where students can connect and are offered support. We work closely with outside agencies details to offer on M-day/student intranet to offer other agencies assistance. STAY mentor has a list of contacts that he regularly shares when situations arise.</p> <p>STAY mentor and advisor regularly discuss cases and refer students if they present with any issues to services such as Counsellor services - Mobile numbers have been added to Myday/student intranet. Students can call directly for link in call, Student association face-book page with wellbeing links and Enabling Services offering tips and assistance for students studying at home</p>	<p>STAY and college advisors support Care Experience students jointly, if they present themselves as homeless, we have a Support link into local housing services in Inverclyde & Renfrewshire where we offer mediation with Social workers and Housing offers for students. Added value is that the STAY mentor often attends meetings to assist the student through the process and can assist in helping students move and ensure they have everything they need and ensure their safety is met. Working together with STAY services, has demonstrated areas where both service share passion for safety for the</p>	<p>Course work is online and good communication via these virtual hubs between staff and students enables us to keep track of who is in attendance and who needs support.</p> <p>Jointly we contact all Care Experience student to ensure they have equipment to continue studies. WCS have provided a few Laptops to students who required these before lockdown. Inverclyde Social Work have been able to offer laptop/tablet to care experienced students struggling and Lee has been able to source Chrome notebooks from Action for Children along with Dongle and access to telephone top ups to maximise connectivity and study success. Partnering with AfC STAY services has meant that we have been able to reach the students who are at most risk and need.</p>

	<p>would step in and contact student to assist when required to get them back on track.</p> <p>WCS regularly passes all withdrawals to Social work/throughcare and SDS to assist the students with benefits. STAY mentor has been able to pick up cases sooner and now offers a framework of barrier removals to keep the student engaged until the end of the course block and onward through offering employability and career planning.</p> <p>Both STAY and WCS teams have links within Financial services (financial fitness etc) and referred students who required.</p> <p>Links within social work department and students to help with applications. This is also a 2-way prong whereby STAY and the college advisor assess the situation and work together to make sure the student understands the process and how to complete the appropriate applications.</p>		<p>student in securing accommodation and STAY has spent days on the phone to identify a safe place to reduce homelessness situations. Together we contact funding to have the application re-assessed for accommodation funding to be added and council tax awards completed. STAY has become an integral part of the college student wellbeing support.</p>	<p>Finally, the college support staff and STAY staff has also contacted all Care Experience students to ensure a new application for 2020-21 has been put on the system and any leavers have support going forward.</p>
--	---	--	--	---

<p>West Lothian College</p>	<p>We have already helped CE students from the FE Discretionary fund but if there was a targeted emergency fund for those students then it would definitely help and would mean less pressure on the discretionary funds available.</p>	<p>All students recognised as in need of support are being contacted regularly in their preferred way. Student support team checking in weekly through text, phone, emails or teams. 1-1 support slots still in place with students to provide ongoing academic and/or personal support.</p> <p>Regular promotion of College support services and relevant external agencies through contact with lecturers, email and social media.</p> <p>Extended counselling service supporting students virtually and referrals are also being made to Big White Wall.</p> <p>The Student Association (SA) offers regular contact with students through the SA website and social media. All requests are supported as appropriate. On financial hardship the SA has worked with student funds officers to assist solutions. Prior to lockdown the SA offered financial help to students through the provision of welfare packs and winter clothing. Students were encouraged to get as much of a supply of welfare items as they needed when the lockdown commenced. The SA has continued to hold remote “Tea and Chat” sessions every week to reduce feelings of isolation for students.</p>	<p>We wouldn’t be aware of anyone getting into arrears with their rent unless they tell us or the landlord gets in touch. West Lothian Council and Almond Housing tend to get in touch with us if a problem arises with students’ rents.</p>	<p>College have provided lap-top loans and ensured students have access to internet.</p> <p>The Student Association (SA) worked with the college to conduct a survey of students and to ensure any student without IT equipment at home was provided with a laptop so they could continue learning. The SA officer delivered laptops to student homes. We issued in the region of 100 laptops.</p> <p>Lecturers are checking in with student groups through email, and meeting with students regularly through teams and zoom. Lecturers and Student Support Team are contacting students who require 1-1 check-ins (c.e and others who are potentially vulnerable) individually in their preferred way.</p> <p>Student support team are offering continued support in a range of ways, student can then decide what is best suited to them and engage.</p>
------------------------------------	---	---	--	---

Universities

	1. Reducing financial hardship.	2. Boosting wellbeing and support.	3. Preventing homelessness.	4. Ensuring academic continuity.
University of Edinburgh	Emergency hardship fund launched, promoted to all students and again to care-experienced	All student support services continuing online. Edinburgh Cares mentoring programme continues. All students have been contacted to check whether they are with friends/family or alone	No students have reported any issues with tenancies – small number in private rented accommodation. Students in university accommodation allowed to stay on rent-free until lockdown is lifted.	All students emailed to promote laptop loans. University-wide group looking at plans for Semester 1 teaching and this may raise some other issues around technology. This has been on the agenda at our Edinburgh Cares group.
Heriot-Watt University	Prioritised for our £50 hardship fund (which can be processed within 24 hrs from a referral) 7 day turn around on normal hardship fund Advice hub offering access to £25 Asda shopping voucher for those in need Providing support with external scholarships Offer holders can apply for accommodation but no reservation fees are being charged at the current time	Regular communication with care experienced students (current and prospective) Wellbeing podcasts and wellbeing resources Sharing external opportunities (e.g. funding, online workshops etc) Bookable wellbeing slots online Big white wall	Students can stay on campus and we are still offering 365-day accommodation (if required) HW Guarantor scheme (HW may act as a UK-based rent guarantor for rent to support care-experienced individuals) Advice Hub will liaise with external agencies to support students where required Accommodation service can also provide impartial advice Emergency rooms on campus (if required)	IT equipment loans available (laptops) which can be sent out to students in need and has been provided to care experienced students. Different forms of communication (not just email in case IT access is an issue)

<p>Queen Margaret University</p>	<p>Increased discretionary funds by £25k since lockdown and been boosted by an additional £35k from Santander Universities.</p> <p>All QM Cares members have been alerted and encouraged to apply and we will continue to do this on a weekly basis throughout the coming months to ensure that CE students and others are aware of the on-going support.</p> <p>Application to the fund has been simplified and those made by our CE, Estranged and Student Carers are prioritised.</p>	<p>All QMU support services, including our Well-Being and Counselling services, are able to be accessed online and again our weekly updates to CE students via QM Cares ensures awareness – we have doubled the number of e-drop-in sessions available each week and we are confident students have been accessing support when required as the services have been heavily promoted via a wide range of routes.</p>	<p>The accommodation team have ensured current students have resolved any housing/accommodation issues and have been very flexible with contracts in terms of extensions and cancellations in regards to on-campus accommodation.</p>	<p>Six students have been supplied with laptops since lockdown and again the offer of support in this area is communicated weekly as part of our QM Cares liaison.</p>
<p>Edinburgh Napier University</p>	<p>ENU has increased Discretionary Funding for care-experienced and all learners (CE have been included within the prioritised group). The application process was moved online immediately after the University entered 'lockdown', when staff moved to remote working. Due to considerable demand additional funding was allocated to this funding stream. Additionally, the separate Nursing & Midwifery Discretionary Fund has experienced increased</p>	<p>Mental Health and Counselling services have been moved to telephone/online formats. The WP team have been in regular contact with students by email, telephone, online seminar, video chat and newsletters (for care-experienced students).</p>	<p>University Student Accommodation have added flexibility to tenancy agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students have been allowed to break an agreement without facing the full financial costs; • extra flexibility has allowed some students to stay when tenancy has ended; • flexibility for those in arrears to stay in accommodation. 	<p>Laptops are available for students to borrow (self-service laptop loan scheme already in place). Lectures were recorded and shared online (Moodle), exams and assessments were moved online or to alternate formats, academic support was also moved online (by correspondence, (video) call), where possible i.e. where external accreditation bodies agree, the majority of modules were automatically passed for 1st and 2nd year students.</p>

	<p>demand and extra funding has been allocated.</p> <p>University Student Accommodation have added flexibility to tenancy agreements: students have been allowed to break an agreement without facing the full financial costs; extra flexibility has allowed some students to stay when tenancy has ended; flexibility for those in arrears also.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Accommodation has stayed open with security and accommodation staff throughout this period. • Discretionary Funding used to support those in private accommodation. 	
<p>Glasgow Caledonian University</p>	<p>Weekly newsletter to care-experienced students highlights internal and external funding opportunities. The team is happy to help with applications too.</p> <p>We have two dedicated funds supporting our students during the pandemic – discretionary and our Common Good fund, which is available for international students, asylum seekers, those about to graduate etc</p> <p>We are currently promoting scholarships for incoming care-experienced students at pre-entry stage</p> <p>Tesco vouchers for those</p>	<p>Our care-experienced students are texted weekly and receive a weekly newsletter via email. This contains relevant information from GCU and across the sector. It also contains a fun task to engage the cohort each week from photography and craft challenges to an online quiz.</p> <p>Care-experienced students who have a staff mentor will also be in regular contact either via online platforms, phone or email</p> <p>The named contact speaks to the university’s Care-Experienced Student Officer weekly to catch up and respond to any issues the students may be facing</p> <p>We have established a channel to share cooking videos from GCU staff as a number of CE students</p>	<p>Students are currently housed in our halls of residence, Caledonian Court, free of charge.</p> <p>Emergency accommodation in Caledonian Court has been provided for care-experienced students if required.</p>	<p>Named contact encourages students to work alongside their personal tutor on a plan to ensure continued academic engagement, and will liaise with academic staff where appropriate</p> <p>All students who weren’t able to sit exams or hand in coursework after trimester 2 have a first attempt in August</p> <p>Laptops and dongles to access internet were promoted and allocated to care-experienced students where needed so that they could access classes, work on coursework and complete online exams</p> <p>We are building an online transition module to help new care-experienced students familiarise themselves with and embed into the university before</p>

	struggling to buy food/household items	<p>had indicated that they would like to use the time at home productively.</p> <p>Care-experienced students staying in our halls of residence, Caledonian Court, can access a suite of support from staff phoning to check in with them, to online activities. Those in self-isolation can access free food and household supplies delivered to their door, further information.</p> <p>Our Student Wellbeing team continues to support students remotely. They also send regular newsletters to those who sign up, and have developed an online wellbeing module for students, hosted on our academic platform.</p>		<p>they begin</p> <p>Planning for Session 20/21 is underway to ensure we have a wraparound structure in place to support all students in what is likely to be a very difficult student experience. This will include targeted support for specific groups including our care-experienced students. We are very aware of the challenges facing new students in particular next year and our plans include enhanced transition support.</p>
Robert Gordon University	<p>Some of the issues that have been raised and covered by discretionary fund payments include lack of access to laptops, rent arrears, lack of money for food, mobile phone charges, childcare costs and overdraft charges.</p> <p>The University is expecting an increase in applications for assistance over the summer if students aren't in employment as the majority of issues are based around Covid-19 having</p>	<p>Regular communication with CE students takes the form of regular emails and phone calls which reminds the students that alongside financial support, wellbeing support also being available.</p> <p>Students have stated that the financial support made by the University has made a substantial difference, both from a practical and from a mental wellbeing perspective</p>	<p>RGU provides support services for students staying in University Halls. Each of the halls has a specialist team who continue to provide welfare and pastoral support for students who may be feeling isolated, lonely, homesick.</p> <p>These staff members also provide support for students living in PBSA properties and the Private</p>	<p>Students have mentioned that moving to online learning has resulted in worries and concerns due to a lack of access to a suitable PC/Laptop. To alleviate this worry</p> <p>Students who have raised the issue of access to IT equipment have been assisted with getting access to a laptop.</p> <p>To date no issues have been raised around wifi, however as a University we are aware this may be an issue in the future and are exploring options to</p>

	a direct effect on students' main source of income.		<p>Rented Sector Where students are experiencing financial hardship with rental payments.</p> <p>The University can provide emergency accommodation in halls to any students who find themselves in a homeless or in a vulnerable accommodation situation. These students are also entitled to be directed to Wellbeing & Counselling services as required.</p>	<p>eliminate this matter.</p> <p>Students who stay in communal flats have found it impossible to locate a safe and quiet space to study and complete online exams. The University has been able to identify and provide suitable safe and quiet spaces for these students.</p>
University of Glasgow	<p>The University of Glasgow (UofG) is very much aware that students' opportunities for part-time work, usually undertaken in this current post-exam period, are much reduced and in many cases non-existent due to Covid-19. Ongoing rent and living costs remain, and with final SAAS payments having been allocated, there is a genuine concern around the prospect of significant financial hardship amongst our student body.</p> <p>UofG has allocated over £1.2 million in student hardship awards since the Covid-19 outbreak began in March, with</p>	<p>Since the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown, the UofG named points of contact for care-experienced and estranged students have maintained proactive email contact with this student group. Regular emails have included updates on and reinforcement of the general UofG messaging around Covid-19 and its impact on learning, teaching & student support; as well as signposting of relevant supports available, both within UofG and externally.</p> <p>The named points of contact have set up and facilitated regular Zoom group chats for care-experienced and estranged students, to help</p>	<p>As mentioned above, automatic Hardship payments have been made to care-experienced and estranged students to help them manage ongoing accommodation costs, at a time when prospects for paid employment are low to non-existent.</p> <p>UofG accommodation remains available to care experienced & estranged students 365 days of the year, and several students have been offered emergency accommodation at short notice to avoid homelessness in the wake</p>	<p>UofG recognised the highly significant impact on students of the Covid-19 outbreak and our institutional response saw a cancellation of exams and automatic progression for students in Yrs 1 & 2. A No Detriment Policy was also introduced, to ensure that students in Yrs 3 & 4, who were required to submit assessments and sit exams during the lockdown period, could only enhance, and not adversely affect, their existing GPA.</p> <p>The UofG named points of contact have provided extensive 1-2-1 support for care-experienced and estranged students navigating the ramifications of Covid-19 on academic progress and continuity; liaising with Advising Teams and Advisors of Study, for</p>

	<p>funds coming from existing and supplementary SAAS Discretionary Funds, as well as UofG's own Hardship Funds and new donor contributions. The UofG Covid-19 Response Fund, launched in April, has raised over £500,000 so far.</p> <p>The application process for UofG Hardship Funds has been streamlined significantly, to make the process quicker and more straightforward for students; and to ensure emergency funds can be allocated to individuals as quickly as possible during these difficult times.</p> <p>Vulnerable student groups at UofG (care-experienced & estranged students, student carers, asylum seekers & refugees) have been made automatic Hardship payments, removing the need for applications altogether. Care-experienced and estranged students have been allocated the largest possible automatic awards - £1,500.</p> <p>Although we have worked hard to help alleviate the obvious financial need among</p>	<p>maintain that important contact, encourage valuable peer-to-peer support, and to alleviate possible social isolation felt during this time. Uptake among students has been good.</p> <p>The regular email communication has consistently encouraged care-experienced and estranged students to reach out for the 1-2-1 support that is available from the named points of contact, whether through email, phone calls, or VC technology (Zoom, Teams, FaceTime, WhatsApp, etc.). There has been an undoubted increase in uptake of this kind of support over the past few months. The named points of contact have advocated for students with, and fast-tracked support for students from, internal UofG services (Financial Aid, Counselling, Accommodation, Advisors of Study and Advising teams, Careers, etc.), and external partners and agencies (SAAS, social work, private landlords, NHS, etc.).</p> <p>Contact with care-experienced and estranged applicants, due to begin their studies at UofG in September 2020, is well underway at this stage; and the past few months have also seen an increased uptake</p>	<p>of the Covid-19 outbreak. Other students have opted to remain in UofG student accommodation over the summer period, providing a stable and secure environment in which to live.</p> <p>As aforementioned, the UofG named points of contact have also liaised with private landlords on behalf of care-experienced and estranged students, to ensure these young people are not adversely affected (or worse, exploited) as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown.</p>	<p>example, to ensure extensions and good cause requests, wherever they have been necessary, are handled quickly and sensitively.</p> <p>Help has also been provided where necessary in sourcing relevant technology, internet access, etc. to ensure care-experienced & estranged students are not disadvantaged by the increased move of learning and teaching to online platforms.</p> <p>UofG also recognises the impact of Covid-19 on those applying to begin study at the institution in September 2020, and we have been keen to ensure academic continuity for these applicants too. The UofG WP team moved quickly to redevelop our existing on-campus Summer School to a fully online model. An early decision was made to offer WP applicants the opportunity to complete subjects at the UofG Summer School in lieu of Higher results. This provided a new opportunity for applicants to influence their results and meet their UofG entry requirements, whilst ensuring the benefit of pre-entry programme participation and ongoing engagement with the institution at this pre-entry stage. Care-experienced & estranged applicants are entitled to and were encouraged to participate in the WP</p>
--	---	---	--	--

	<p>students, we are conscious that existing Hardship awards will only go so far. With SAAS payments now complete for the academic year, and little improvement in terms of students' job prospects, we remain very concerned for the financial situation of our student body, and, in particular, for those within our most vulnerable student groups. Our fundraising activity continues, and we will always seek to prioritise support for those students we know will need it most. As an institution we would welcome further support from the Scottish Government in addressing what could well be a crisis of student financial need in the coming months.</p>	<p>of the pre-entry support offered by the UofG named points of contact. This has ranged from support with applications to UofG accommodation (both emergency and longer-term), UofG scholarships, and UofG WP programmes, to advocacy with external partners and agencies (schools, social work, SAAS, MCR Pathways, Robertson Trust, Buttle UK, MoveOn, etc.). We would consider this pre-entry and transition support even more imperative this year, in helping improve the wellbeing and assure the futures of care-experienced and estranged students progressing to UofG in September.</p>		<p>Summer School at every opportunity (i.e. whether or not Summer School was a condition of entry). Take up of this opportunity among care-experienced and estranged applicants has been very good.</p> <p>Further induction & orientation engagements for incoming students (both online and on-campus when possible) are now in planning for August/September, and even beyond; the UofG named points of contact will continue to liaise with UofG services (Accommodation, Scholarships, Disability, Counselling, etc.) and external partners (Local Authority and schools contacts, SAAS, MCR Pathways, Robertson Trust, Buttle UK, etc.) to ensure that appropriate supports are in place for care-experienced & estranged students, providing the best possibility for smooth transitions to UofG under these truly unprecedented circumstances.</p>
--	--	---	--	--

<p>University of St Andrews</p>	<p>The University of St Andrews has a range of financial aid for undergraduates. CE status and the personal circumstances of the individual will be taken into account in the scholarship selection process. There are also a number of other types of financial support, including the University's discretionary fund which can be accessed at any point during their studies.</p> <p>The University of St Andrews ensures that care-experienced students are made aware of paid employment opportunities through the University Ambassador scheme, and of other internship opportunities.</p> <p>Where financial need is great, the Admissions' department at the University can bypass the one year of voluntary work before paid work is available and place students onto casual contracts.</p> <p>As each local authority may also have a policy detailing how it can help care experienced students financially to cover the costs of your studies, for example,</p>	<p>The University named co-ordinator communicates with CE applicants and students regularly to offer support if/where needed. At least one face-to-face meeting is scheduled per semester, as well as phone calls, texts and emails on a regular basis. The named contact holds more formalised meetings (at least one per semester) with care-experienced young people and keeps records of any issues arising or experiences to be noted. This ensures that going forward, the University can report more effectively on the impact changes and developments are having on the students and where improvements could be made. The support provided by student service is by choice (i.e. opt on) and is provided for those who identify and want this check in.</p> <p>The University has a 'care experienced and young carer' forum that meets bi-annually and raises awareness of any issues which are arising. Input from this meeting is used to inform future developments in the Corporate Parenting Plan. This forum is student led with staff support and facilitated by the Students'</p>	<p>We understand that finding somewhere to live whilst studying is particularly important if you are care experienced. In response to this, the University endeavours to support care experienced in securing year-round accommodation for the duration of their studies. The support coordinators can help care experienced students find the accommodation they may require outside of the University's term time.</p>	<p>As part of our commitment to offer support to CE students, we will work to encourage students to self-identify during the application process as well as create other points of identification throughout the matriculation process, which will allow us to target support and encourage communication between relevant staff and these students.</p> <p>The University guarantees an offer to all care-experienced young people who have met, or are predicted to meet, the minimum requirements for their chosen course and demonstrated a passion for the subject throughout their application. Upon entering the University, CE young people are expected to achieve in line with their peers. However, they will be provided with extra support if/when this is needed (for example, tutoring sessions, counselling sessions, staff attendance at reviews etc.) Student services run 'check-ins' to ensure care-experienced students are progressing well in their studies and to break down any perceived barriers before they become an issue. This will take the format of either a formal meeting or phone call with the named person</p> <p>The University of St Andrews has a process for self-identification during</p>
--	--	--	--	--

	<p>payments for books and accommodation. The University of St Andrews support coordinators can provide help contacting local authorities as keyworkers, social workers or aftercare teams should be able to provide further information on what support the relevant local authority can provide.</p>	<p>Association. The bi-annual meetings give relevant staff and care-experienced students the opportunity to discuss any barriers which may present themselves during the young person's time at University and develop ways to limit or remove these. Engagement is sought from all key University bodies (including Student Services, Careers, Registry and CAPOD).</p> <p>We are continuing to signpost students to relevant departments should they need additional support – e.g. CAPOD for studying advice, Student Services for health and wellbeing issues. This support is available to all students but depending on what issues may arise, additional support may also be accessed, e.g. a peer tutor.</p>		<p>the matriculation process and after (e.g. through student portal) to ensure all CEYP are offered relevant support. Student Services has a means of updating student profile to reflect disclosures should a student allow us to record this.</p>
<p>University of Strathclyde</p>	<p>We have the Covid-19 hardship fund and also the discretionary fund which CE students can apply for. Student can access discretionary fund through the summer months also, and we recently circulated information on these to our CE students and encouraged them to apply.</p> <p>We also contacted our CE</p>	<p>Student counselling continues to be accessible remotely in addition to the Strathclyde Cares mentor programme. We also offered a Zoom session with CE students where both support staff and Union staff were on hand to answer any questions or concerns. We have a CE students society which all students have been invited to join which includes a Facebook page where students</p>	<p>The Covid-19 hardship fund and discretionary funds would be applicable here, and our Accommodation office and Advice Hub are on hand to help students with emergency accommodation or to access other accommodation where necessary. We also promote the Unite</p>	<p>The provision of laptops and internet connectivity grants. I think departments themselves could advise what information/support they are providing, but I believe students have been well informed on how to access online classes and sit exams etc. remotely. I have also circulated information on library resources accessible online to CE students.</p>

	students to ask if they had suitable equipment (computer/laptop) and internet connection to complete their studies remotely, and have supplied any students in need with a laptop and an £100 grant for internet connectivity.	can connect.	Foundation scholarship (3 years free accommodation) to our CE students and have received the highest number of applications this year.	
--	--	--------------	--	--

Other organisations

	1. Reducing financial hardship.	2. Boosting wellbeing and support.	3. Preventing homelessness.	4. Ensuring academic continuity.
MCR Pathways	With support from Scottish Government and JP Morgan, MCR are providing 300 young people with a combination of IT equipment and internet access across the country through our Get Online programme. Pathways Coordinators have been working in their local schools and hubs to distribute food parcels and toiletries to young people and their families. We have been staying in touch with our Next Steps young people via our online YST Hub and Facebook pages ensuring	MCR has connected over 1,300 young people with their Pathways Coordinators and mentors via video calls, live chat and emails to ensure young people are safe and well and staying connected to support systems. MCR have been posting updated access information and advice to Next Steps young people on mental health and wellbeing via online YST Hub and Facebook pages and offering individual support via instant messaging and video calls. We have been posting online activities and discussion topics to support young people to engage	Ongoing support as outlined in Wellbeing section.	MCR is focused on supporting over 400 school leavers connecting directly with colleges and universities to check on status of applications, changes to admissions processes, ensuring that young people have access to the most up to date information and are supported to take the necessary actions to secure their places. Our Pathways Coordinators are working with individual young people and SDS to ensure that young people have back up plans should they not achieve the appropriate entry requirements. We have supported a young person with change courses after accepting the original course in

	<p>they have access to food and assisting with funding applications from various crisis funds for clothing, household equipment and help with household bills and giving out food parcels when required.</p>	<p>with each other and share experiences, creating a peer network of support. We are also conducting a survey of our young people around the impact of COVID 19 on their mental health and wellbeing, educational attainment and engagement and future plans.</p> <p><i>“You need someone to remind you that you can do it, that you’re going somewhere and that the only thing that will get you there is not giving up. That’s what a mentor does. Being isolated in lockdown it’s even more important to know that the work you’re doing is for something, that someone believes in your future and just that someone actually cares.” Chloe, young person</i></p>		<p>partnership with the institution.</p> <p>We are also working with Glasgow University to ensure all appropriate young people are signed up to Summer School and working with STAY YP Practitioner at Glasgow Kelvin College to ensure additional supports are in place for young people starting courses in the 2020/21 academic year.</p> <p>MCR are supporting our Next Steps young people to ensure they have submitted all course work to their individual institutions. The MCR Get Online programme is also enabling young people to access school work to support their academic attainment giving them the ability to engage with school work supported by their Pathways Coordinator and mentor.</p>
<p>Skills Development Scotland</p>	<p>As our local centres remain closed, SDS has expanded its helpline to cover specific advice and support on employment and redundancy issues which may have arisen as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>Our My World of Work site has a new dedicated area for job vacancies with an immediate start.</p> <p>Please refer to this link for the range of services available to students who may be experiencing financial hardship as a result of the loss of part-time work/summer employment.</p>			
<p>Action for Children</p>	<p>STAY was introduced to the three Glasgow Colleges and West College Scotland College in September 2019 and has made a positive impact, operating across the college campus locations. A staff member is based within college student support services and has become an integral part of the support offered to students.</p> <p>The key objectives and aims of STAY are to reach out and offer support to care Experienced students to assist the students in sustaining their college opportunity and reaching their potential. We provide support to the CE students using three strands, warm handover from</p>			

	<p>college staff/ referral partners, light touch interventions where the student only needs soft support and Intensive intervention, where our Mentors can support the student throughout their college journey.</p> <p>In year one we have reached out to 220 students across the participating colleges. All 220 students received information and warm handovers from named advisors or lecturers to the STAY service. 120 students progressed to the intensive support element of the programme, with the remaining being light touch (although we accept that some young people may have been both. I.e. receiving light touch support before issues escalated to requiring more intensive support</p> <p>Feedback from college teams is that this approach enables students to receive robust one to one support whilst in and out of college. Staff has responded to many critical areas such as housing, finance and mental health concerns and has worked directly with lecturers, student guidance and Safeguarding to maximise opportunity for attendance and attainment. We have seen a rise in attendance as the students are aware that Action for Children STAY Mentors are always available to listen and support conflict resolutions before they reach that critical stage.</p>
<p>Sandra White MSP</p>	<p>The Parliament welcomes the action taken by Glasgow Colleges' Regional Board (GCRB) in its allocation £5,000 of regional funding to support students as part of its collaborative STAY project with Action for Children, which works across Glasgow's three colleges and West College Scotland and aims to improve outcomes for care-experienced young people attending college; notes that care-experienced college students in Glasgow have received brand new laptops during lockdown to assist them in completing their current college year and future studies; further notes that STAY support workers have continued to offer emotional and practical support during the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown, delivering parcels containing toiletries and food items to students; acknowledges the importance of the support offered by GCRB, STAY and Action for Children, and commends their actions during these unprecedented times.</p>