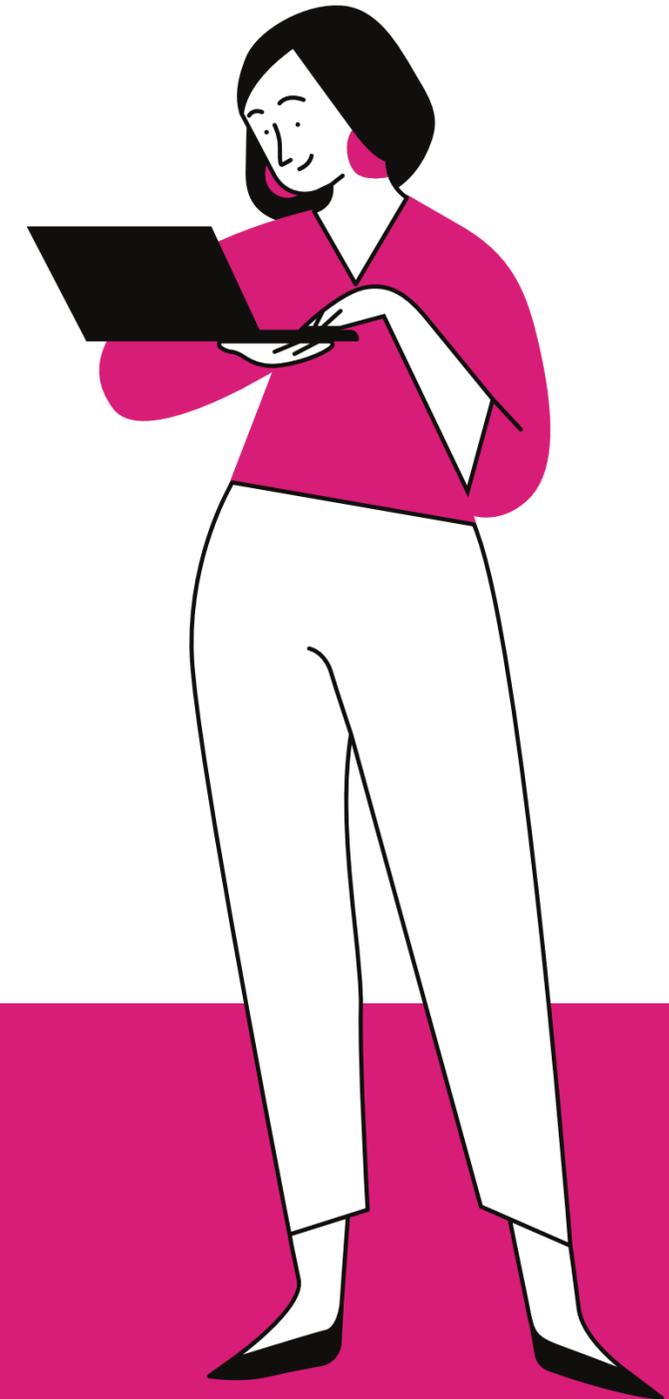


WHO CARES? SCOTLAND

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# Scotland's Universities' Guaranteed Offer: A Guide for Care Experienced Students



EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE

# What is this guide about?

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This document provides an overview of the Guaranteed Offer as well as attempting to answer some frequently asked questions. It has been created by The Training and Education Team at [Who Cares? Scotland](#) in collaboration with [Universities Scotland](#).

We at Who Cares? Scotland hope that the guaranteed offer is a huge step towards widening access and addressing inequality for Care Experienced people in higher education. We hope too that it highlights the commitment Scottish universities have made to the Care Experienced community.

If you have questions after reading this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing [corporateparenting@whocaresScotland.org](mailto:corporateparenting@whocaresScotland.org).



**WHO  
CARES?**  
SCOTLAND

*"We welcome the Guaranteed Offer for Care Experienced people and are particularly delighted that no upper age limit has been placed on this offer. We know that the impact of care is lifelong, and Scottish universities recognising that Care Experienced people may come to higher education later in life, and ensuring they have an adjusted offer, is another positive step towards educational parity. We want Care Experienced people to know that university is for them, and support is on offer if they choose to take this route."*

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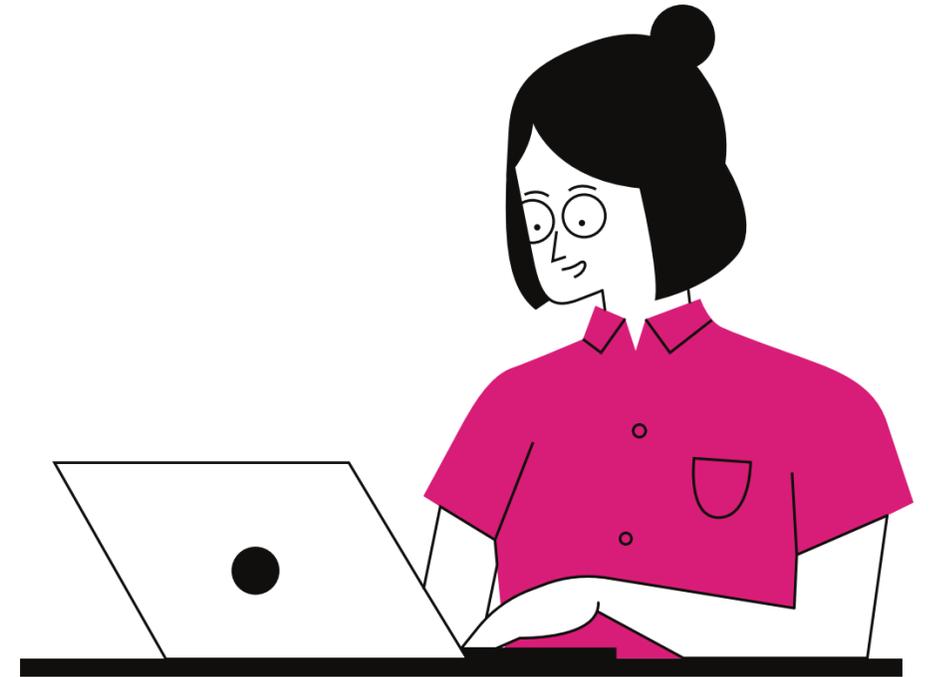
**Chloe Dobson**  
**Training and Education Manager (Corporate Parenting)**  
**Who Cares? Scotland**



# What is the guaranteed offer?

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On the 25th July 2019, Scotland's 18 higher education institutions announced their commitment to championing Care Experienced students as they journey through education. Care Experienced applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements for their chosen course will be guaranteed an offer of an undergraduate place at university.



The Guaranteed Offer is there to support Scotland's universities' commitment to widening access. When we talk about widening access, we mean the work being done by the government, colleges and universities to increase the number of people entering into higher education, particularly those who come from under-represented groups such as those who have been in care. For those with Care Experience, widening access means that universities are taking measures to assess the full potential of Care Experienced people, taking into consideration their circumstances and barriers they may have faced, instead of looking only at their grades.

If you are Care Experienced and have experienced barriers that have made it more difficult for you to meet the standard entry requirements for your course, then universities will take this into account. The Guaranteed Offer will allow universities to make an offer to you for your chosen course using their minimum entry requirements.

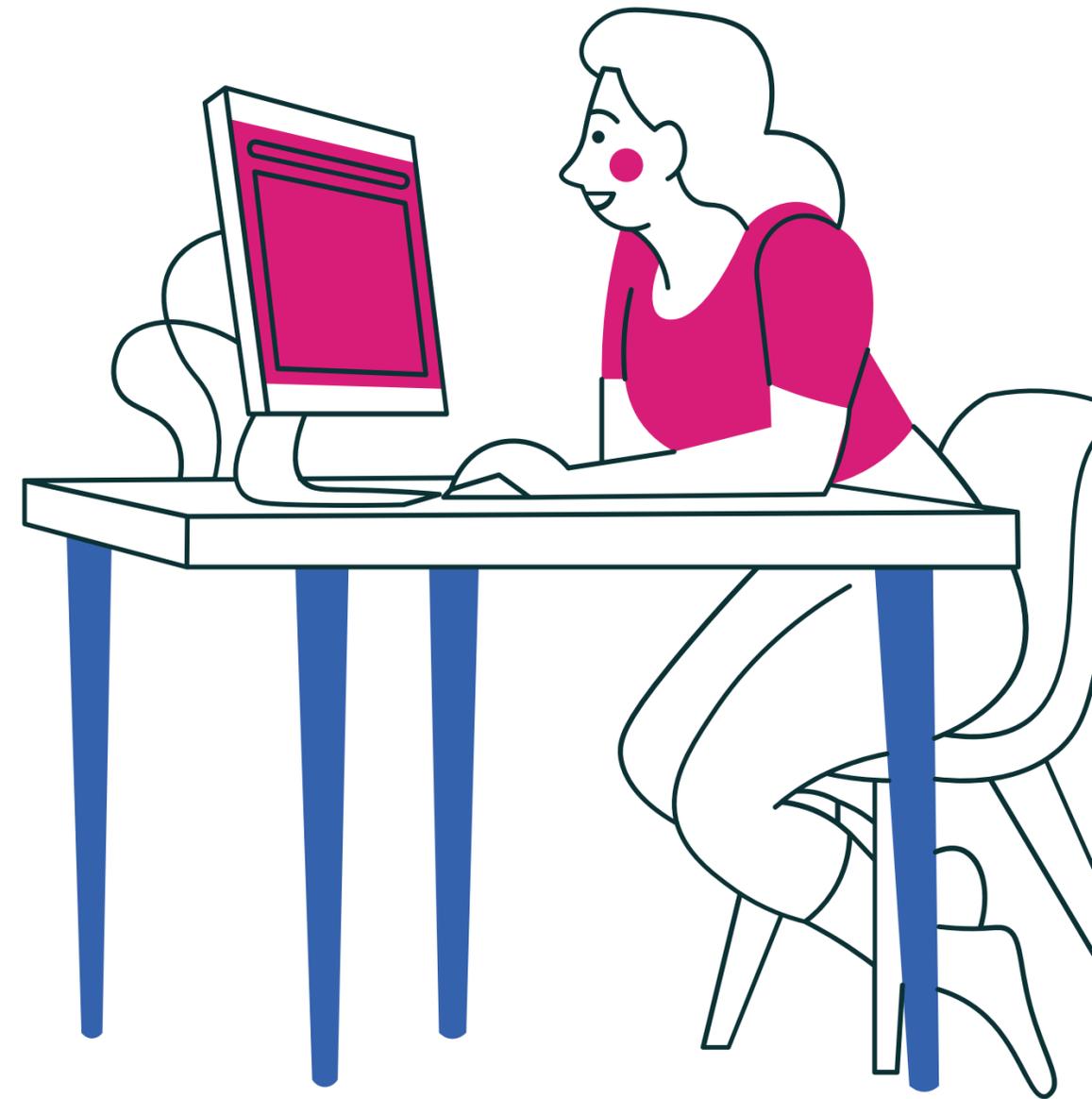
# Why is this important for Care Experienced students?

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At Who Cares? Scotland, we know that the impact of care can be felt in all aspects of life. Our members often tell us how challenging their journey through education can be while in care due to placement moves, disruption at home, and other significant factors.

We know that being in care can create challenging circumstances which have the potential to impact greatly on an individual's ability to achieve their desired results at school. We know that this can then impact on future educational choices. We also know this has little to do with an individual's true ability, but that their experience of care causes disruption throughout their life which can influence their education.

There is a significant gap between Care Experienced people and non-Care Experienced people moving onto higher Education. This inequality has now been recognised by Scotland's higher Education institutions with the implementation of the Guaranteed Offer for Care Experienced students.



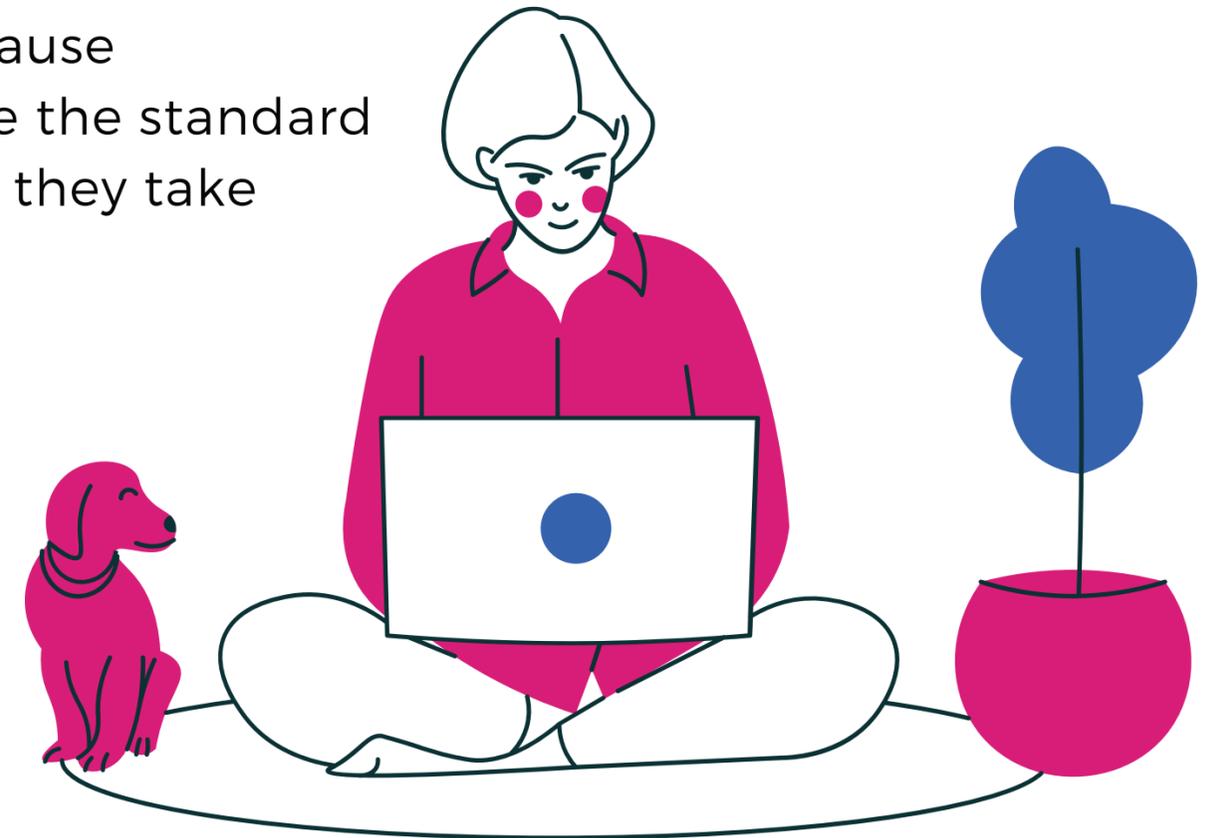
# What are the minimum entry requirements?

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Every degree you apply for will have 'standard entry requirements'; the standards you must meet in order to be considered for the course you are applying for (i.e. certain Highers). The Guaranteed Offer, however, refers to 'minimum entry requirements' which are there to help applicants such as Care Experienced people and other groups who may have faced significant barriers.

In creating minimum entry requirements, universities tried to better understand the minimum academic achievement they think you need to succeed on your chosen course. This is not because you are considered as any less capable, but because universities acknowledge it may have been more difficult for you to achieve the standard entry requirements while facing challenges and barriers in your life, and so they take these circumstances into account.

The Guaranteed Offer is for entry to university, but not for entry to college. Many colleges consider the barriers and challenges a Care Experienced applicant may have faced and so have a very good understanding of the Care Experienced journey to further and higher education. If you have questions about applying to a specific college or university, you can find the name of their Care Experienced contact on [Propel](#).





*“The University of Glasgow is committed to supporting those with Care Experience, and we guarantee that Care Experienced applicants will receive an adjusted offer of entry for their chosen course, at our lowest possible access threshold. This Guaranteed Offer is central to our belief that all applicants should have an equal chance of entry, and that the opportunity to go to university should be determined by the ambitions, talents and potential of an individual, and not their background or life circumstances.*”

*Our Guaranteed Offer is there for Care Experienced people to help transform those dreams of going to university into reality. We want to encourage Care Experienced people to take that next step of the learner journey with us, and we have the on-course supports in place to make sure that exciting next step is a successful one!”*

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**Dr Daniel Keenan**  
**Care-experienced & Estranged Student Support, Widening Participation**  
**University of Glasgow**

# Q & A

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## **Does the Guaranteed Offer mean I have a guaranteed place on the course of my choice?**

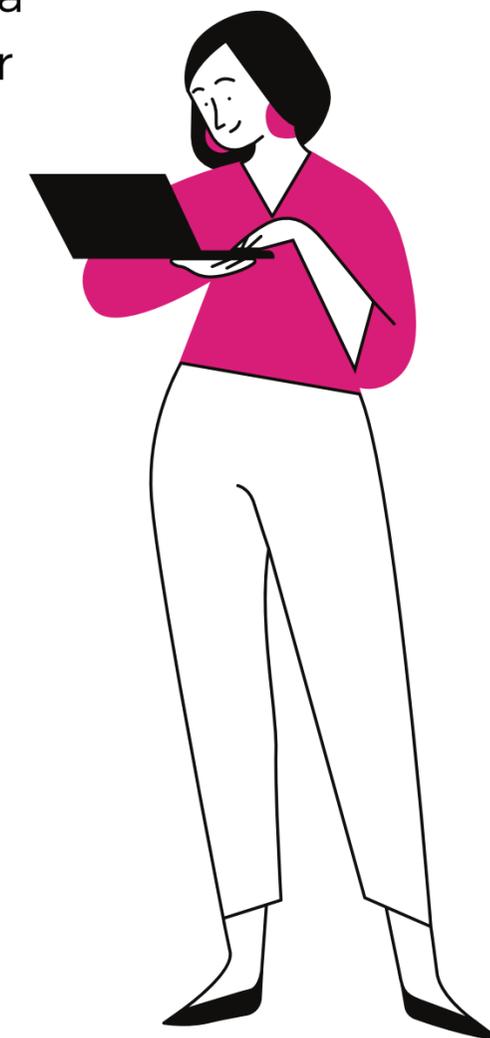
Care Experienced applicants who meet the minimum entry requirements for their chosen course will be guaranteed an offer of an undergraduate place at university. If your chosen institution cannot offer you a place on the course to which you originally applied, they will talk with you about whether they can offer you a place on an alternative course in a related subject.

It is important to be aware that it may not always be possible for your chosen university to offer you a place on your chosen course. This can be due to the following;

- it is a course with lots of applicants and not many places; or
- it has a limited number of places because the Scottish Government restricts the total number of places available (in, for example, teacher training, nursing, social work).

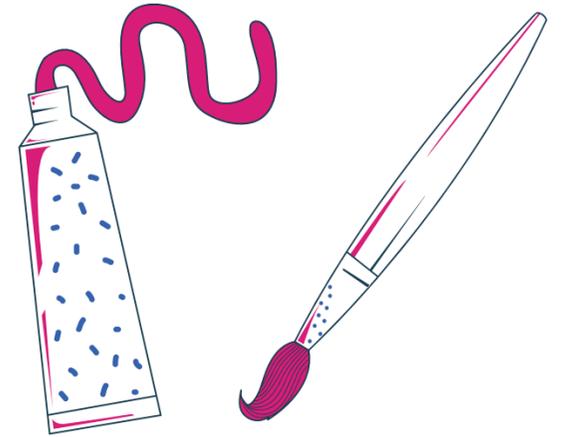
In cases like these, your chosen university will ask you to discuss alternative options with them.

Undergraduate degree places are in high demand and unfortunately universities can't offer places to every person who applies, even when they meet the minimum or standard entry requirements.



## **I want to apply for a course that offers an audition or a portfolio submission. Does the Guaranteed Offer mean I don't have to audition or submit a portfolio?**

Any degree that has other requirements for entry will still require you to participate in these processes - they are part of the minimum entry requirements for these courses. Usually for performing arts or art and design programmes, the most important aspect of the entry process is the demonstration of your ability within this subject area. Therefore, auditions and portfolios will still be required, and the Guaranteed Offer will likely not make much impact here, although most institutions also give some additional consideration to widening access applicants at the stage of audition/interview/portfolio. Your chosen university will have a page on their website which will explain all of this for you and which courses this applies to.

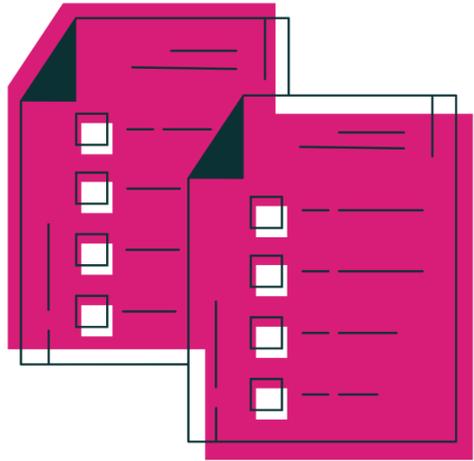


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## **Does my personal statement no longer matter because of the Guaranteed Offer?**

Your personal statement will still matter and is part of the minimum entry requirements. For example, if you apply for a social work degree and you meet the minimum entry requirements but submit a personal statement that does not discuss social work at all, you will be unlikely to receive an offer of a place. Even with the Guaranteed Offer, you should still carefully construct a personal statement that clearly demonstrates your skills, attributes and experience specifically relating to the subject area you apply for.

## **I want to be judged on the same criteria as all other applicants. How can the Guaranteed Offer be fair?**

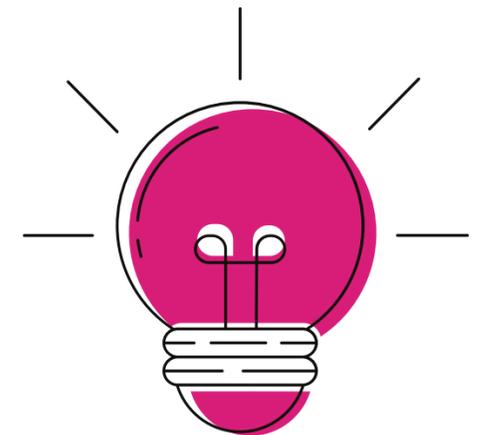


Please don't worry about fairness in relation to the Guaranteed Offer. In fact, the Guaranteed Offer is a way to make things fairer, rather than less fair. Many Care Experienced applicants will have experienced a disrupted education and will have attended school whilst dealing with challenging things in their personal life. The achievement of managing to sit and pass exams with so much going on in their lives is something that must be recognised. The Guaranteed Offer is a way to try to level the playing field between Care Experienced applicants and non-Care Experienced applicants. It is not a way to attempt to give preferential treatment to Care Experienced people.

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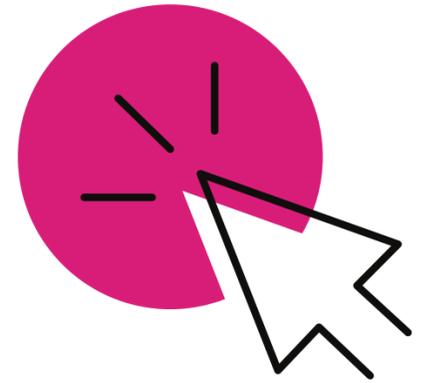
## **I don't want to tell anyone I'm Care Experienced, so how can the Guaranteed Offer benefit me?**

We understand that sometimes you don't want to tell people that you are Care Experienced. Please know that declaring this during the application process will only benefit you. No one will ever use this information to your detriment. It is a way for universities to identify who they can offer specific support to - often this can include financial support too. If you would like to discuss how your information will be used by the university, you can contact the named contact at the universities you are applying to. All the named contacts are listed on [Propel](#). Unfortunately, if you do not declare that you are Care Experienced, you cannot benefit from the Guaranteed Offer.



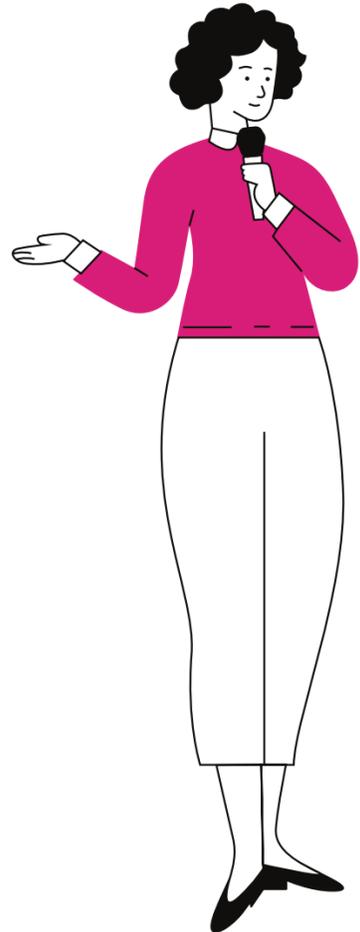
## I don't meet the minimum entry requirements so what can I do to gain entry to university?

Starting your higher education journey at college could be a good first step. The named contact at each university can help with this, as can the named contact within colleges. You might even find that attending college first would be a great alternative so that you can take advantage of an articulation route to university. To find out more about how articulation can benefit you, please see our information on articulation [here](#).



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## The Guaranteed Offer is great, but will my lecturers be told that I am Care Experienced?



The official answer is no. The rule of thumb is that your lecturers won't be told about your Care Experience. You essentially tick a box when filling out your application so that your chosen university is aware of your situation and journey and therefore the Guaranteed Offer can apply to you. All students who have Care Experience will be directed towards the named contact at the university you attend to make sure you have all the support and guidance you need as a Care Experienced student.

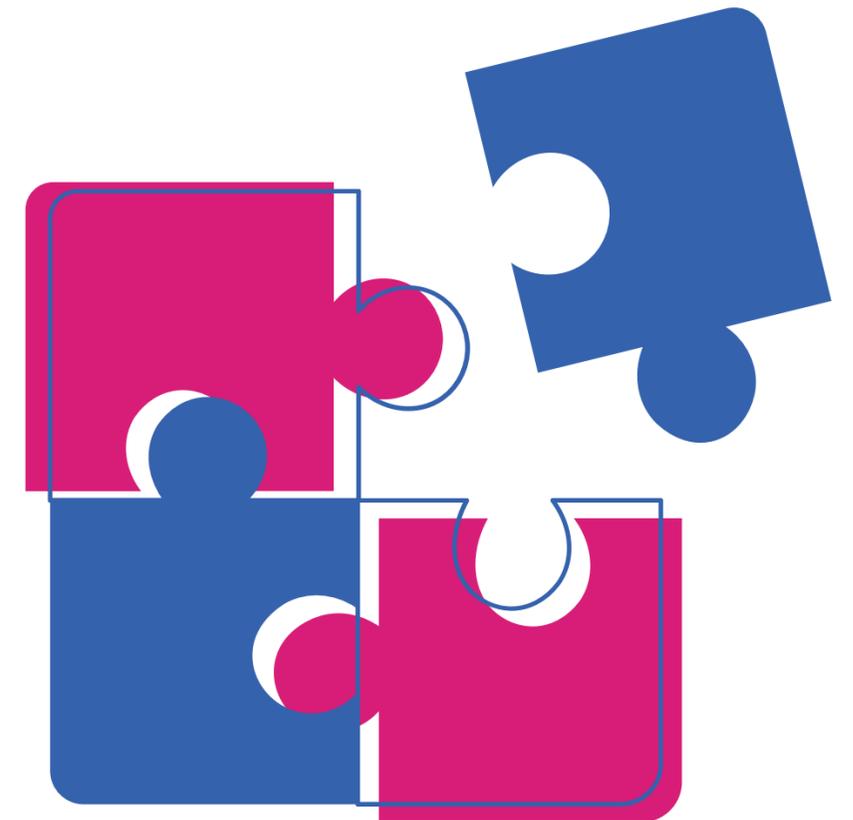
It cannot be fully promised however, that your lecturer will not be made aware of your Care Experience. Many lecturers are part of the application process and read peoples applications prior to students' attendance on their course. Please understand that if a lecturer is aware of your Care Experience, it will never be used against you. This information will only ever be used to provide any additional support you may require and, in some cases, to provide additional financial assistance.

## **Will I be treated differently by my university because I am Care Experienced?**

The Guaranteed Offer is there to level the playing field, it is not there to single you out unfairly.

When you make your application, you can declare that you are Care Experienced. Universities all over the country have support systems and programmes in place for their Care Experienced students, such as The University of Strathclyde and their Strathclyde Cares programme, which will offer guidance and support to you on your journey through university. You can opt out of this at any time; however, the support is always available to you. All universities have these support systems and programmes in place to help you while at university.

All universities will provide you with a named contact whom you can contact for support through your university career as a Care Experienced student. Be sure to check this out on your chosen institution's website. This information will also be made available to you by the admissions team once you receive your place on your course.



# Guaranteed Offer Resources

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- [Propel](#) - find the contact details of the Care Experienced named contact at the college or university you would like to apply to
- [Universities Scotland](#) - find out more about the announcement of the Guaranteed Offer
- [Nicola Sturgeon Video](#) - hear from First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on the importance of the Guaranteed Offer
- [Articulation Guide](#) - find out more about articulation routes between college and university

