

Dear student

We hope this e-mail finds you well. Just before the festive break, we wanted to share some information that you may find useful.

We are happy to tell you that we have a new, dedicated mailbox for care-experienced students – [OUScotland-Cares@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUScotland-Cares@open.ac.uk). Graeme and Shadia, members of our Access, Participation and Success team, are on hand to respond to any questions you may have or to signpost you to relevant support.



**Shadia and Graeme**

The OU in Scotland will be closed from **6pm on 23 December to 9am on 5 January**, so Shadia and Graeme won't be able to respond during that time, but we realise that Christmas can be a difficult time for many people. If you need someone to talk to there is **24/7 support** available 365 days a year from [Togetherall](#) – a mental health and wellbeing service provided free to OU students.

**Who Cares? Scotland** offers support to care-experienced people over the festive period, with a helpline open Monday-Friday, 12 noon to 4pm including Christmas Day and New Year's Day. You can call them on **0330 107 7540** or email [help@whocaresscotland.org](mailto:help@whocaresscotland.org).

If you are looking for study support or guidance related to your module or TMAs, your first point of contact will still be your tutor. They will usually let you know what dates they are taking off and when/if you can contact them over the break. In the meantime, you may be able to find answers to any questions through your StudentHome [Help Centre](#).

The **OU Students Association** runs [online events](#) for students, including the Mental Wellbeing Meet-Up every Sunday. Next one is on [20 December](#).

In January 2021, we are launching a **digital inclusion fund** for care-experienced students. This funding will cover hardware or software to support online learning, for example laptops, tablets, software packages. We'll be in touch next month with full details so make sure to check your mail.

Make sure you've told us that you are care-experienced to ensure you receive these mailings and information on funding and support. You can update your profile on **StudentHome**.

- Go to StudentHome – Profile (on left hand side) – Update personal details – About you – Identity, needs and circumstances – Edit details.
- Scroll up to the question headed 'Care Leaver'. There are four options: I have never been in care / I was in care in Scotland for a time (up to the age of 18) / I have been in care in the rest of the UK / I do not wish to declare.
- Choose one and click the Submit tab at the bottom of the screen to update your record.

## A note from your Students Association

The OU Students Association would like to extend a warm welcome to you all and hope that you will have fulfilling and successful study with the OU, regardless of what your aspirations are. You may not know, but every student at the OU is automatically a member of the Students Association and we run a number of services and initiatives that you might find helpful throughout your journey as a student.

You will find much more information about us on [our website](#) and we hope we might see you attend one of our [meet ups](#), [join a club or society](#) or even [volunteer with us](#) in future. If you're looking for a supportive community and are disabled, from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Background or identify as LGBTQ+ you may also want to check out our [Support Groups](#). You could also think about setting up a group for care-experienced students. To find out more about what we do and how we support and represent the students at the OU, follow us on social media or [sign up to our newsletter](#) for news and events.

We also want to make you aware of our [Peer Support Service](#). We have an anonymous team of volunteers who are ready to help you get the most out of your study experience with the OU. Although they cannot provide any academic advice, if you're lacking motivation, not sure where to start or low in confidence, our Supporters are on hand to help you. They can answer one-off queries or you can ask about our longer one-to-one support where a Supporter will be appointed to you for the length of your module.

Your Student Association representative for Scotland is [Elyse Hocking](#)  
[Cinnomen McGuigan](#) is VP Education and sits on the OU in Scotland's Corporate Parenting group

### Unsubscribe

If you think you are getting these mailings by mistake as you have never been in care, or if you would prefer not to hear from us, please let us know at [OUScotland-Cares@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUScotland-Cares@open.ac.uk) and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Warmest wishes for the festive period, and we'll be in touch in 2021



---

**Graeme and Shadia** | Access, Participation and Success (Scotland)

The Open University in Scotland, 10 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, EH3 7QJ  
[OUScotland-cares@open.ac.uk](mailto:OUScotland-cares@open.ac.uk) | [www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/care-experienced](http://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/care-experienced)

---



