

OU Scotland Cares January 2021 - news about bursaries and mental health support

Hello

It may not be the happiest of new years as we find ourselves in even stricter lockdown. We hope you're doing ok. We have some good news to share.

The Open University has just launched a bursary for care-experienced students

Our new **Care Experienced Bursary** offers an award to registered students who are currently in, or have previously been in, the care of a Local Authority; for any length of time and at any stage in their life. You can find full information here: [Care Experienced Bursary](#).

Students who submit an eligible application will receive a £250 cash payment via bank transfer. There is a similar bursary available for student [carers](#).

You can use this funding to cover any study-related costs. In February, we will be launching a **Digital Inclusion Fund** to cover devices such as laptops. You may apply for both funds.

To be eligible for the Care Experienced Bursary, you'll need to meet **all** the following criteria:

- ordinarily resident in the UK and eligible for a UK module fee (for example if you are eligible for the Part-Time Fee Grant)
- able to demonstrate proof of care experience
- have a personal income of no more than £25,000 per year, or be in receipt of a qualifying benefit
- studying at least 30 credits of Open University undergraduate or postgraduate study during the 2020/21 or 2021/22 academic years (01 August 2020 to 31 July 2022).

New mental health support

If you feel like things are getting on top of you, you can talk to someone online 24/7 at [Togetherall](#) – a free mental health and wellbeing service provided free to OU students. Students in Scotland can now access counselling through Togetherall with funding from the Scottish Government.

Live therapy is an online, direct **counselling** service providing the same number of sessions and quality of treatment as face-to-face therapy. Sessions are delivered by any combination of text, audio and webcam, based on your preferences, by a team of UK-based accredited counsellors.

Visit the [Help Centre](#) for more information or contact your **student support team** for a referral.

Winter Direct Aid from Who Cares? Scotland

If you are care-experienced or a kinship carer of any age you can apply for help with the following:

- Support to get essential items such as food, warm clothing, nappies, heating, bedding, furniture, and white goods.
- Support you with a cash payment or by helping with an essential purchase.

Unfortunately this fund has temporarily closed due to the volume of applications, but please keep checking [Winter Direct Aid Offer](#) for information on when it will re-open.

Contact us

Remember you can contact Graeme and Shadia at OuScotland-Cares@open.ac.uk if you have any questions.



Find out more about the support we offer Care Experienced students and access previous mailings at <http://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/care-experienced>

The term **Care Experienced** refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care and includes kinship care, foster care, residential care, looked after at home and adoption. 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.