



# Stronger Futures

## Skills for Life



## About

Stronger Futures is all about the next steps you will be taking towards independence, whether this is as a care leaver or whether you are Staying Put with your foster parent this guide will inform you of who is who and show you what opportunities are on offer to help you on your path to independence.

## The Players/Team

You are the star of the show here and will have a team around you to support you in conquering the challenges and grabbing the opportunities ahead.



When you are in year 10 your FCA Social worker will start to work with you on your Steps to Adulthood Plan. This assessment will identify areas to be worked on to develop your independence skills; it will also help your Local Authority Social Worker to work with you to complete your Pathway Plan.

When you are in year 11 our FCA Education Lead will support you to reach your education goals via our Raising Achievement Plan. This plan will focus on any support you may need to reach your full potential.

Your foster parent & the FCA Participation Team will work with you to achieve the goals set out in your Steps to Adulthood Plan. We will keep you informed of all of the events we offer to support you in reaching your ambitions.

When you reach the age of 18 you will either decide to leave care or stay with your foster parent. Whatever you decide we will support & guide you. You will also have the opportunity to become a care leaver consultant for FCA.

## Life Tools

### **Creative Mode – Unlimited resources at your disposal**

- AQA Unit award scheme
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- Barclays LifeSkills
- The Prince's Trust
- NCS
- Residential Independent Living Skills weekend
- Employability Workshop
- Support to achieve your educational goals

### **Survival Mode – The resources/skills needed to build your world & maintain health**

- Health & Mental Wellbeing workshops
- Sexual Health & Relationships
- Money & Finance skills

## **Knowledge Mode – Your right to be heard and taken seriously**

You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your plans for preparation for independence and leaving care. You have a right to support from an independent advocate if you are thinking about challenging decisions about the support you have been given.

Independent advocates can inform you about your rights and help you to be heard in meetings.

You have a right to see the information we keep about you, including the files and records written about you when you were in care.

## **Some of the independence skills needed to enable you to live a happy, safe and healthy lifestyle include:**

- Looking after yourself and staying safe
- Keeping your home clean and tidy, how to do laundry and other household tasks
- Cooking and shopping for healthy, nutritious food
- Managing your money and paying bills
- Having I.D and a bank account
- Contacting Housing, the Job Centre or utility providers
- Making your own health appointments
- Attending meetings / appointments on time
- Reporting repairs or resolving issues with your accommodation
- Knowing how to access local facilities, and be a good neighbour.
- Asking for support when needed

The FCA Participation Team can support you in gaining these skills in preparation for independence

## **Education, Training and Employment**

We want you to succeed in your education, training and employment.

We can support you with;

- Careers information and advice
- Raising Achievement Plan for all Year 11 students
- Employability workshops
- Access to hospitality training via Springboard
- Access to work experience and apprenticeships via The Academy

## Further Education

Here are a few guidelines to help you navigate your way through the process and guidelines of what financial and practical support you are entitled to.



## University applications

Remember to tick the box on your UCAS application to let the university or college you are applying to know you have been in care.

Look at the [Care leaver's guide](#), which explains the reasons why UCAS encourage you to tick the box in the care questions on your application.

This is confidential and will not be used against you! It does, however, let the right person at the university or college know that you might need financial or other support, and can help you put that in place before you start your course.

To find out what the university or college you are applying to can offer, it is best to contact them directly. There are a number of ways to do this.

Look at the information on their website. Try typing into an internet search engine the name of the university and care leaver to help you find pages on their website about what they can offer you.



## Become Charity

Visit the Become Charity website [www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk) and look for their Propel page, which is a fully searchable website for care leavers providing information on the support available to you at colleges and universities across the UK.

Find out:

- whether 365 day accommodation is available
- what bursaries and grants are on offer
- the help and support care leavers can expect
- the contact details of specific contacts to get in touch with at each institution

Propel also has loads of other useful info, like an overview of student funding, specific advice for care leavers and inspirational stories from care-experienced students about how it was for them.

You will find general information about moving into higher education from care, alongside specific details about the support individual unis and colleges across the UK offer. Each uni or college has its own page, containing an overview of its courses and the specific support it can give care leavers.

You will be able to make an informed choice about the right course at the right place for you, and make sure you are aware of all the support you are entitled to.

Become also publishes a series of factsheets to support young people leaving care. These factsheets cover topics such as financial support post-18, getting support to go to university, and understanding pathway plans.

## National Network for the Education of Care Leavers

The [NNECL website](#) provides information on events and further resources.



## Financial support

There is new guidance available, which builds on wider government support available to care leavers. The Department for Education has already extended the offer of support from a Personal Adviser to all leavers to the age of 25, while all care leavers who go to university are entitled to a £2,000 bursary from their local council, £1,200 from the college if they go into further education and £1,000 for the first year of an apprenticeship.

The funding available varies, depending on where you live now and where in the UK you want to study, although there is often funding available for studying abroad too. The information here typically relates to full-time courses and may be different for part-time courses.

The main source of your funding for your tuition and living costs will come from Student Finance England. [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance). Student Finance England pay tuition fees of up to £9,250 directly to your university. If you are a full time student, you can apply for a maintenance loan of up to £9,203 (or £12,010 if studying in London) in 2020/21 for you to use on things like food, bills and rent. You will not need to start paying any loans back until you are earning at least £26,575.

As a care leaver, you will be classed as an 'independent student' and so household income will not be taken into account when working out how much student finance you can get. For more information on applying through Student Finance England as a care leaver search [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

You may be able to apply for bursaries or extra help if you are studying medicine, social work or teacher training (but only if you are doing a postgraduate qualification).

If you are starting higher education for the first time before your 25th birthday, you should be entitled to a one-off Higher Education Bursary of at least £2000 from your local authority, normally paid in instalments during your course. Ask your local authority to explain how it will be paid to you.

## Other funding

If you have a disability, including mental health conditions, long-term illness or specific learning difficulties, you can apply for a Disabled Students' Allowance. This non-repayable funding can typically support you with the costs of specialist equipment, non-medical helpers or additional travel or study costs arising because of your disability. Please visit [www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas](http://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas) for more information.

You can find out more about funding and finances for higher education through Becomes All about the Money and Helping you ReachHigher factsheets.

The Unite Foundation [www.unitefoundation.co.uk/](http://www.unitefoundation.co.uk/) offers scholarships in partnership with 28 universities, which include free university accommodation for three years of undergraduate study. Find out more, including which universities offer the scholarship, on their website.

There may also be charities and other organisations that could help, with either one-off payments, or support that is more regular. You can use Turn2us [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) to do a grants search for funding that you might be eligible for.

The Care Leavers Foundation [thecareleaversfoundation.org](http://thecareleaversfoundation.org) also offer small grants to care leavers.

## Stay connected with FCA

Here at FCA we are recruiting Care Leaver Consultants as we recognise the power of the knowledge and experience you can bring to young people, foster parents and staff. You will have the training to enable you to:

- Sit on interview panels
- Mentor our young people
- Engage in one of the many workshops we offer to our young people
- Promote positive outcomes
- Take part in foster parent training sessions
- Be part of our panel process

| Resource   | Sign me up | Completed |
|--|------------|-----------|
| <b>Barclays LifeSkills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops skills for the workplace</li> <li>• Money know how</li> <li>• Confidence &amp; Motivation</li> </ul>  |            |           |
| <b>D of E</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain essential skills, experience, confidence and resilience to successfully navigate adult life.</li> <li>• An opportunity to discover new interests and talents.</li> <li>• A tool to develop essential skills for life and work.</li> <li>• A recognised mark of achievement; respected by employers.</li> </ul> |            |           |
| <b>Independent Living Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekend residential</li> <li>• Budgeting skills</li> <li>• Cookery know how</li> <li>• Team building</li> </ul>  |            |           |
| <b>AQA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accreditation for your achievements</li> <li>• Develops skills &amp; knowledge</li> <li>• Access to thousands of units</li> </ul>  |            |           |
| <b>Employability Workshop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview skills</li> <li>• CV writing</li> <li>• Skills to become an interviewer</li> <li>• Presentation</li> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity training</li> </ul>   |            |           |