

A guide for young carers considering higher education



A partnership of
Sheffield Hallam University
and The University of Sheffield

Do you help to look after someone at home?

Are you thinking about your future?

Uni could be for you!

Are you a young person who looks after someone who has

- ▶ a long-term physical illness?
- ▶ a physical or learning disability?
- ▶ mental health problems?
- ▶ drug / alcohol problems?

If you are and you're thinking about higher education, please read on.

Going into higher education can open up many more career opportunities. You can gain the skills you need to help you achieve your dream job and earn more money in your adult working life. Studying for a degree also gives you the chance to make lasting friendships, adapt more quickly to a changing world and have greater confidence.

Higher education might not be for everyone, but your caring responsibilities should never prevent you from realising your ambitions. It's a big decision to make, so knowing what help is out there can make you feel more confident.

This booklet will tell you about the support you can get to help you achieve your higher education goals.

Help when you're at school

If you think you're a young carer and would like more support, the best thing to do is let someone know. Lots of schools and colleges have great support for young carers but if they don't know they can't help.

If you're applying to college or sixth form in Sheffield, there is a question on Sheffield Progress to let them know about your caring role. Filling it in means they can let you know about the support they offer to young carers.

A Young Carers Assessment can also help you get support. It will tell a worker about your caring responsibilities, so you can plan things together that will make your life easier. For more information, contact your local council and ask about getting a young carers assessment.

Deciding whether and where to go to university, and what subject to study, are big choices to make. Finding out about the specific support available for young carers will be an important part of your decision. Most schools have links with universities to give you the chance to find out more, visit a university or hear from staff and students visiting your school.

You can also get help from your local young carers service. Visit the Hepp website (www.hepp.ac.uk/who-are-you/care-experienced-and-young-carers/) for services in Sheffield City Region, or search online.

It's your choice, but telling people about your caring role means you can access more help and support.

“Although teachers in school and university are there to help you and your family, for me, having close friends who were always there to support and listen to me was most useful.

Being a carer can be a great advantage at university – I found I know more basic life skills (cooking, cleaning, ironing) than my flatmates!”

Joe, student at The University of Sheffield



Help when you're in sixth form or at college

Getting into higher education can feel difficult if you also have caring responsibilities at home. Most universities and colleges offer schemes to help young carers get there - in Sheffield this includes:

SHU Progress at Sheffield Hallam University

SHU Progress provides extra support if you face barriers to going to university, including if you have caring responsibilities. It's available from October in the academic year before you start university. By being on SHU Progress you will

- ▶ have a named contact to provide advice and answer questions
- ▶ be invited to exclusive events at the university (financial support is available to cover the cost of travel)
- ▶ receive email updates about relevant opportunities and support
- ▶ receive support with making the best application, including workshops on preparing for interviews
- ▶ you may be eligible to receive an adjusted offer or receive special consideration during the admissions process
- ▶ be referred to specialist teams within the university, for example the Student Wellbeing Service, Career Guidance and Funding, if you need additional support in these areas

For more information visit www.shu.ac.uk/shuprogress or contact the SHU Progress team on 0114 225 4777 or email shu-progress@shu.ac.uk

“The support from my college and young carers support group was invaluable. They helped liaise with the universities that I applied for to ask them what support they offered for young carers.

The advice I would give is to go for it, definitely explore every option you have to follow your dreams and aspirations. You never know what's out there and what you could achieve!”

Autumn, Sheffield Hallam University nursing graduate



“I didn’t want to make a fuss, but talking about my caring meant I got an amended sixth form timetable and my teachers understood why I might miss deadlines or be late to class. I didn’t talk about the chaos at home very often, but knowing I could gave me the confidence to carry on coming to school. They helped me inform the university, who took the impact on my results into account. I’m so proud of how hard I’ve worked to be here at university.” Student at The University of Sheffield

Widening Participation Team at The University of Sheffield

There are a range of sustained programmes that explore higher education at The University of Sheffield for students in Y9-Y13, which young carers can apply for with their school or college.

For students in Y9-Y11, your Head of Year can let you know if your school takes part in our Discover US or US in Schools Mentoring, and if they feel it would be beneficial for you. These programmes support you in understanding more about university and help you to consider your future choices.

The Discover Post-16 programme gives you a University of Sheffield experience, helps you decide if higher education is right for you, and what to study. You can apply for Medicine, Dentistry, Law, STEM or Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences pathways. These provide practical help with subject tasters, study techniques, application support and an introduction to life at the University. Acceptance onto the scheme may lead to an adjusted offer of up to two grades lower than the standard offer.

To find out more, visit www.sheffield.ac.uk/schools/programmes or send your questions to schoolsliason@sheffield.ac.uk

Applying: Access Sheffield

The University of Sheffield Access Sheffield policies help to ensure that everyone who has the potential to succeed has the opportunity to do so. Young carers may be eligible for an alternative offer equivalent to one grade below the standard A Level entry requirements for their course. For more information visit www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/access or get in touch access@sheffield.ac.uk.

If you want to study outside Sheffield, ask any university or college what they do for young carers.

Do I have to tell anyone I'm a young carer when I apply to college or university?

It's always your decision, but it could really benefit you if you do. Universities and colleges often have lots of support for young carers, including personal support or financial help. If they know about your caring responsibilities, they can tell you about this support before you arrive, so it feels less scary and more manageable. Being a young carer will also give you lots of useful experiences and qualities that make your application stronger.

- ▶ There may be a question on your college or sixth form application to let them know about your caring responsibilities (if you're studying in Sheffield, there is one on Sheffield Progress).
- ▶ You can apply for university support schemes like those listed in the 'help when you're in sixth form or at college' section.
- ▶ You can write about your caring role to support and enhance your personal statement.
- ▶ If you feel your caring role has impacted on your Year 13 exam results, you can let the university or college know and they may be able to give you extra consideration.

UCAS are planning to introduce a tick box to indicate if you have caring responsibilities when you apply for higher education, so please look out for this in the future.

How can I afford to care and study at the same time?

Many universities and colleges offer financial help for young carers, to help you with the costs of studying, transport or arranging some respite care. These are often called bursaries, grants or scholarships and **you don't need to pay them back**. They can make a real difference to your daily routine. For example, for students starting in 2020

- ▶ Sheffield Hallam University has a Student Success Scholarship, giving carers a payment of typically between £200 to £2,000 per year of undergraduate study
- ▶ The University of Sheffield currently gives carers £4,500 per year of study

Check with the university or college you are interested in before you apply to see what is available.

Help with being away from home

The idea of leaving the person you care for can be worrying, whether you go into university for classes during the day or if you choose to move away to study. But you have the right to study if you want to. Some ways to help this feel easier could be

- ▶ contacting your local city council to request a carers assessment, so they know your home situation is changing and can check your family are getting the right support so you can study
- ▶ contacting your local young carers or adult carers services to see if they can offer any advice
- ▶ speaking to staff at the university you want to apply to. If they know you are a carer, they will know that sometimes you might need to rush home for emergencies.

What if something goes wrong while I'm studying?

Caring is part of everyday life and it can be really rewarding. You may find you cope really well most of the time, but sometimes it's good to know where to get help if you need it. For example, if the person you care for urgently needs you while you are away from home. Wherever and whatever you study, there will be someone available to give you the time and space you need to talk things through. You're the expert in your life and university advisers are ready to listen, whether you need help dealing with emotions, support in an emergency or planning your studies.

“As a carer for my mum, I was worried about having enough support and time for university. However, I knew deep down I really needed to do it not only for me but to make my family proud! At college I spoke up about my situation to my teacher and have not looked back since! I received help preparing for my interview, and financial support for a laptop and travel expenses”

Lacey, student at Sheffield Hallam University



What Next?

Studying for a degree is a great experience that can change your life. To make sure you benefit...

- 1. Do your research.** Every university and college is different. Many offer help to young carers before you even start studying there so make sure you find out what support you can get. They have specially trained advisers, who you can usually find within the Student Services teams.
- 2. Go to open days.** If this is difficult because of caring, find out if the university or college can offer financial help towards travel costs or arrange for you to speak to someone on the phone or have a separate visit instead.
- 3. Work hard to get the best results you can.** If you haven't already, let someone at school or college know about your caring so they can support you to achieve your best.
- 4. Had a crisis during your exams?** Call the university or college to let them know. They might be able to take this into account.
- 5. Be proud about being a young carer.** It's an amazing thing you do and will have taught you a lot. It could also really help your personal statement if you include the skills and experience that caring has given you.
- 6. Go into higher education and get the funding, degree, and career that you deserve!**



For more information, please visit the following webpages for young carers

- ▶ **Hepp** www.hepp.ac.uk/who-are-you/care-experienced-and-young-carers
- ▶ **Sheffield Hallam University** www.shu.ac.uk/shuprogress
- ▶ **The University of Sheffield** <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/access/carers>
- ▶ **UCAS** www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/individual-needs/students-caring-responsibilities

For general information on higher education see our *To Go or Not to Go?* brochure, available in print or from the Hepp website – www.hepp.ac.uk



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