

OU Scotland Cares

October 2023



Welcome

Hello,

Welcome to a new academic year at The Open University in Scotland. We hope you are enjoying your studies so far this year.

You are receiving this newsletter because you have told us you have experience of being in care. The Open University has lots of support available for care experienced students, so make a note of the contacts below for when you might need them.

In this newsletter we have some news and opportunities that we would like to share with you.

Did you know? All Universities in Scotland are named corporate parents. As Proud Corporate Parents we have a dedicated mailbox for care experienced students (OUScotland-cares@open.ac.uk). Ewe and Katrina, 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.



Student Reference Group

We have a student reference group that represents the views of care experienced students at the OU. This group meets at least twice a year to review the Open University in Scotland's Corporate Parenting Action Plan and set priorities for the coming year. The group keep in touch on MS Teams between meetings and attend the corporate parenting steering group twice a year.

If you are interested in joining the student reference group or would like to find out more, please get in touch with Ewe and Katrina via OUScotland-cares@open.ac.uk.

Care Experienced Week 2023

Care Experienced Week takes place from the 22nd to 29th of October 2023. This is a week to celebrate the care experienced community and provide opportunities for learning and connection.

[WhoCares? Scotland](#) offers support to care experience people across Scotland.

This support takes a variety of forms including independent advocacy, a dedicated helpline, providing knowledge about your rights and access to local groups.

For Care Experienced Week, WhoCares? Scotland are running events which you can get involved in:

- [Time to Shine Festival - 28 October, Glasgow](#)
- [The Love Rally - 29 October, Glasgow](#)

To find out more information, please see [here](#). You can keep up to date with WhoCares? Scotland work across Care Experienced Week using the hashtag, **#CEW23**.



Financial Support

Care Experienced Bursary

If you haven't already applied, there is still time to apply for the Care Experienced Bursary. This bursary offers students a single payment of £250 to support study costs such as purchasing a laptop or organising connection to the internet. Find out more information about the eligibility and how to apply [here](#).

Discretionary Fund

You might be eligible for our Discretionary Fund that is designed to assist with study-related costs. Find out more information about the eligibility and how to apply [here](#).

Opportunities and Events

Using OpenLearn to support your studies

The Open University in Scotland invites you to join our OpenLearn session. OpenLearn is a free learning platform with thousands of courses, articles, videos and interactives. In this session we will look at:

The OpenLearn logo consists of the word 'OpenLearn' in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The 'O' is significantly larger than the other letters, and the 'n' is also larger than the 'e' and 'a'.

- how to get started using OpenLearn
- some key areas where OpenLearn can support you in your studies including study skills, support for your mental health and wellbeing, employability skills and life skills too.

The session will be interactive by design but any activities will always have an opt-out option. It is open to any care experienced students from colleges and universities in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

There are two timeslots available to choose from at the point of registration:

- **13th November at 13.00-14.00**
- **14th November at 19.00-20.00**

The event will be hosted online on MS Teams. If you would like to sign up, please see [here](#).

Student Hub Live Events



[Student Hub Live](#) platform is a series of live, online and interactive events open to everyone at The Open University. At-a-glance upcoming events include;

- [Mastering essay planning \(Advanced\) - 25 October](#)
- [Developing your essay planning \(Intermediate\) - 1 November](#)
- [Creative problem solving: techniques for success - 15 November](#)
- [Support and wellbeing for student carers - 21 November](#)
- [Busting some myths around academic conduct - 23 November](#)

Career and Employability Services

Want to discover where your OU study might take you in life? Whatever your career needs and whoever you are, OU Careers and Employability Services are here to help you succeed.



- To help identify your career readiness and relevant career support for you, start with our [3-minute careers check-in](#).
- Our new [Navigate Your Future](#) activity pathway makes the process of working out your goals and next steps simpler. It's designed to build your confidence and help you progress towards your goals at your own pace.
- [CareersFest23 \(7-9 November\)](#) is open for bookings with new events being added daily. Join us for online panel events, employer showcases, and career skills sessions designed to put you back in the driving seat. Meet employers such as the **NHS Education Scotland, Department for Work and Pensions Scotland, DS Smith and E-Placement Scotland**. Be inspired by stories and strategies of how others have overcome career barriers, learn how to describe your unique strengths in ways employers listen to and discover how to get the experience you need to change direction.

- At [OpportunityHub](#) you can find hundreds of vacancies, events and volunteering opportunities and book a [careers consultation](#) with our dedicated Scotland Careers and Employability Consultant.

Examples of current opportunities in Scotland include:

- [Various professional opportunities, Penumbra Mental Health \(Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh\)](#)

Penumbra is one of Scotland's largest mental health charities. We work to promote mental health and wellbeing for all, preventing mental ill health for people who are 'at risk' and supporting people with mental ill health to live fulfilling lives. Various part time and full time support worker and practitioner opportunities including volunteering are available. Suitable for people with lived experience of mental health studying Health and Social Care. **Closing date: as per each job advert**

- [Volunteer Mentor, MCR Pathways, \(across Scotland\)](#)

MCR Pathways is a national, award-winning mentoring programme that supports young people in P7 to S6, who are care-experienced or have experienced disadvantage, to help them realise their full potential through education. We have an urgent need for Volunteer Mentors, who can provide guidance and support, and who can help make a difference to the lives of young people who need someone to chat with, listen to them, and encourage them to reach their full potential. The programme is flexible, requiring only 1 hour per week during school term time. **Closing date: 31 December 2023**

OU Students Association

The OU Students Association provides opportunities to get involved, socialise, find information and news, get help, attend events, access services to support your learning and to have fun being an OU student.



Everything you need to know about the OU Students Association and upcoming events they are running can be found [here](#).

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

[TalkCampus](#)

TalkCampus provides a safe, totally anonymous online space to air concerns with other students and get support for your mental health and wellbeing. It's available to you 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[Shout 85258](#)

We are proud to partner with Shout 85258 to offer free and confidential support to any OU student who is feeling overwhelmed or is struggling to cope. Shout's text message support service is anonymous and available 24/7.

[OU Wellbeing app](#)

The OU Wellbeing app provides a fun and interactive way to create positive habits to help maintain good wellbeing. The app offers many features including weekly posts providing advice and support and a library of self-help tools and podcasts to help you improve your wellbeing as well as your study skills.

[Lifelink - video and phone counselling for students in Scotland](#)

Students in Scotland can access free, confidential video and phone counselling through our partnership with Lifelink. They have over 30 years' experience in supporting people to make positive changes in their lives. You'll be offered an initial assessment by a Lifelink therapist followed by one-to-one sessions with a fully qualified counsellor who is matched to your needs.

The Open University in Scotland

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Unsubscribe from the message:

You are receiving this email because you have told us you have experience of being in care. 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 by contacting us at OUScotland-cares@open.ac.uk

**Keep well,
Ewe and Katrina**

OU Scotland Cares team