

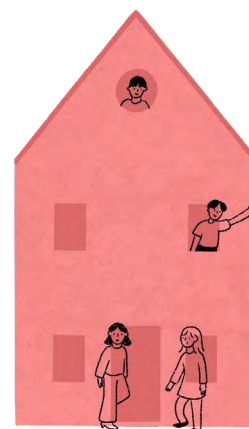
University of Edinburgh Corporate Parenting Plan – Implementation Report

2021/22 to 2023/24

“You have been so helpful and brilliant at making sure I have everything I need to come to study at Edinburgh. Out of all the universities I have dealt with I have to say that Edinburgh has really stood out and been amazing with everything.”

“Most people don’t realise how liberating the [Access] scholarship is for us students, it has been vital for me to be able to study and live here.”

“Especially like coming from a care experienced background, we tend to not really have a parent to give you advice in the university. And although [my Edinburgh Cares staff mentor] can’t fill that role 100%, he still does that part and it is really nice hearing him validate my thoughts.”



The Children and Young People Act 2014 (Scotland) names universities as corporate parents and legalises our statutory duty for the wellbeing of care experienced students. The progress that the University of Edinburgh has achieved in celebrating, including, and supporting our care-experienced and estranged students from pre-application, point of application, on programme transition, and onwards to graduation since 2021 has taken a significant collaborative effort from all parts of the institution. Our key collaborators are our care-experienced and estranged students as well as external partners the Hub for Success (HfS), Who Cares? Scotland and Stand Alone¹.

At the time of this report, there are 54 care-experienced first-year students and a cohort of 222 care-experienced students across all years of study at the University of Edinburgh².

This report covers progress made in the academic years 2021/22 to 2023/24 and shows that the majority of our priority areas are reporting progress. Two out of seven priority areas are making good progress (29%) while five are progressing with minor issues (71%) ([See Appendix 1.1 - Action owner and contributor progress updates overview on page 4](#)). The report highlights the commitment of staff in ensuring the needs of these priority student groups are met and shows how this support alongside other opportunities can be transformational for students. The progress report also surfaces some challenges, including the need for existing activities and resources to be utilised even more effectively. There have been positive changes across the institution since the current Corporate Parenting Plan was created. The roll-out of the Student Adviser model and the introduction of Wellbeing Advisers being the most significant. However, the University now finds itself operating in a more challenging financial climate alongside many others in the Higher Education sector. Working together with internal stakeholders and external partners will be key to building on the progress we have already made to enhance the student experience for our care-experienced and estranged students.

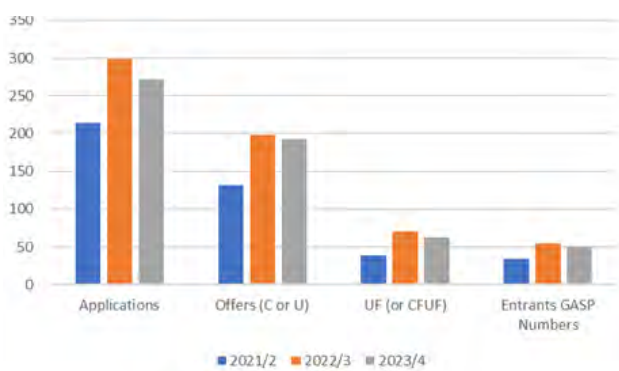
1 Stand Alone was an organisation that supported people who were estranged. The organisation closed in March 2024. The University of Edinburgh reaffirmed its commitment to our estranged students before Stand Alone closed by signing the Stand Alone Legacy Pledge.

2 The Edinburgh Cares team within Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) at the University of Edinburgh tracks care-experienced entrants using UCAS tick box data and our verification information. Students can also tick a care-experience box when they register and matriculate, and this is used to report care-experience intake for the purposes of SFC Outcome Agreement monitoring. Therefore, the number of entrants reported by the SRA Edinburgh Cares team and external reporting can differ – we will be clear which data sets are being referred to throughout.

Our progress highlights

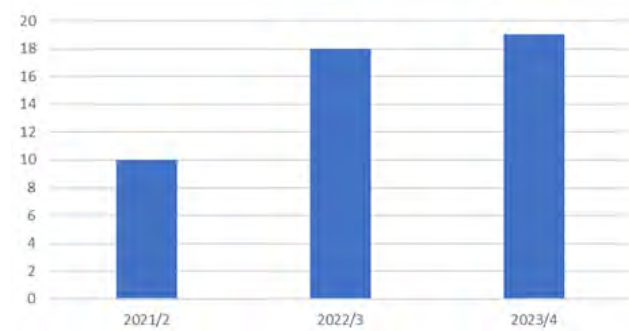
- ▷ **Increased our care-experienced new entrant intake** from academic year 2021 (34 students) to academic year 2023 (50 students).
- ▷ **Targeted and promoted employment and volunteering opportunities** to our care-experienced and estranged students effectively. This has increased the visibility of our care-experienced and estranged students across the institution as well as beyond through partnership with the Hub for Success.
- ▷ **Maximised our community building activities** during each academic year by building effective partnerships with local theatres and the Edinburgh Festival.
- ▷ **Grown our staff mentor offer to care-experienced and estranged students.** We currently have 50 mentor-mentee pairings.
- ▷ **Over 150 hours of staff training** has been delivered across the institution to a variety of staff audiences since 2022.
- ▷ **Graduation costs;** since academic year 2022 we have supported 30 care-experienced and estranged students with graduation costs so that they can celebrate their achievements. 47 care-experienced students graduated in the last three years (10 in 2022, 18 in 2023, and 19 in 2024).
- ▷ **Insights programme participation;** in the academic year 2023/24, 10 care-experienced students took part in the University's Insights Programme delivered by the Careers Service and Development & Alumni. Following a programme of support and activities, students spend a fully funded week meeting and networking with University Alumni working in a range of sectors.

Care-experienced students entrance numbers



Graph 1 The number of care-experienced students starting a degree has increased significantly since 2021; from 34 students in 2021, to 54 in 2022 and 50 starting in 2023.

Care-experienced students graduate numbers



Graph 2 The number of care-experienced graduates increased year-on-year with 10 students graduating in 2022, 18 in 2023, and 19 in 2024.

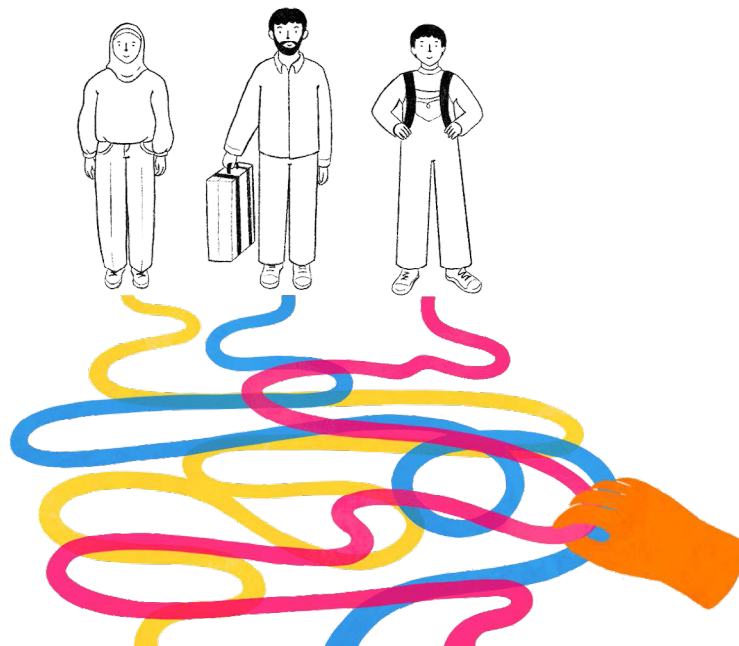
As we move towards 2027 our areas of focus will include:

- ▷ Ensuring on-course opportunities are as inclusive as possible and pro-actively promoted to care experienced and estranged students.
- ▷ Ensuring our accommodation offer continues to provide a strong safety net for care-experienced and estranged students despite the current housing crisis.
- ▷ Strengthening the financial support on offer to care-experienced and estranged students during a challenging financial climate, ensuring they continue to be prioritised for support.
- ▷ Embedding leadership and ownership of corporate parenting activities with key staff and services across the University to improve student experience.



Issues and concerns

- ▷ **Scale** – Care-experienced and estranged students are a niche group so engaging and communicating can be difficult.
- ▷ **Scale** - It can be challenging ensure all staff recognise what their Corporate Parenting responsibilities are.
- ▷ **Capacity, resource, and funding** - Meeting the needs of care-experienced and estranged students in terms of 12-month tenancies is challenging due to the declared housing crisis in Edinburgh and the growing demand on UoE accommodation. Challenges include offering certainty of where students will be accommodated, co-locating students together over the summer and providing support with moving costs and logistics.
- ▷ **Systems** - Communication across teams to ensure smooth processing of student record updates, scholarship allocation and discretionary fund applications.
- ▷ **Staff training** - There is an opportunity to reach more staff across the university with training around our legislative duties, the way data is used and how we support students.



Appendix 1.1 - Action owner and contributor progress updates overview

1. Improving our 365 Day accommodation offer to care-experienced and estranged students

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
1.1 Explore the viability of 12-month tenancies.	ACE ResLife	Amber
1.2 Establish and embedding preferential rent rates.	ACE ResLife	Amber
1.3 Establishing an improved culture of care.	ACE ResLife	Amber

2. Improving our financial support offer for care-experienced and estranged students.

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
2.1 Prioritisation of access to funds	Scholarships and Finance Team, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, Student Advisers	Amber
2.2 More support for studying away	Development and Alumni team, SWAY team, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, Scholarships and Finance Team	Amber
2.3 Support for the summer break	ACE, Development and Alumni team, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, ResLife, Scholarships and Finance Team, The Chaplaincy	Amber
2.4 Participation grant: Effectively promote this to these student groups and ensure they are prioritised if funds are limited	SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, Scholarship and Finance Team	Green

3. Enhancing how care-experienced and estranged students navigate the university

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
3.1 Better systems to prevent retelling of personal circumstances.	ACE, Admission Teams, DLSS, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, Student Advisers, Registry Services, Wellbeing Advisers	Amber
3.2 Increased visibility and representation	CAM, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, SRA, Programme, school and college staff	Green
3.3 Peer learning opportunities.	SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, Programme, school, and college staff	Amber
3.4 Students from these priority student groups get early / targeted engagement as appropriate at programme, school, college and central service areas	ACE, Edinburgh Cares Committee, Edinburgh Cares Team, ResLife, Registry Services, Staff at programme, school, and college levels	Amber
3.5 Edinburgh Cares staff mentoring - continue to grow this	CAM, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, University of Edinburgh staff	Green



4. Build a strong student community

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
4.1 Creating a community of support	ACE, DLSS, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, ResLife, Student Advisers, Registry Services, The Chaplaincy, Wellbeing Advisers	Amber
4.2 Creating a mechanism to feed into the Edinburgh Cares Committee / be a conduit to informing and influencing University strategy	Edinburgh Cares Committee, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, University Executive Team	Amber
4.3 SRA/ Widening Participation mentor scheme	CAM, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA	Amber

5. Employability and skills

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
5.1 Promote opportunities and 'grow' what is on offer for these students	CAM, Careers Service, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, University of Edinburgh programme, school, and college staff	Green

6. Development of applicant supporter resources and training

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
6.1 Development of resources and training (suitable for in-person and online delivery) for applicant supporters (family members, teachers, social workers, foster carers, etc.)	CAM, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, SAAS, SFE, Stand Alone, The Advice Place, The Hub for Success	Green

7. Development of student body and staff resources and training building on previous professional services framework resources.

Specific Action	Priority owners and contributors	RAG
7.1 The creation of a resource and training package that has a focus on understanding trauma and improving the culture of compassion across the institution for students and staff	CAM, SRA Edinburgh Cares Team, EUSA, Student Advisers, Wellbeing Advisers University staff at programme, school, and college levels	Amber



Appendix 1.2 - Action owner and contributor progress updates

1. Improving our 365 Day accommodation offer to care-experienced and estranged students

What has been completed

- ▷ Completed our sector leading wellbeing support model. We created a collaborative, cross-institutional paper, outlining best practices in relation to guaranteed accommodation offer for our care-experienced (CE) students which was informed by students from the University of Edinburgh (UoE).
- ▷ SRA WP team schools outreach work identifies CE/ estranged (Est) students on Widening Participation (WP) programmes and ensures they are aware of the support on offer at UoE should that young person be considering applying to UoE.
- ▷ Accommodation, Catering and Events (ACE) assess student's need for preferential rent rates on a case-by-case basis.

What is in progress

- ▷ Transitioning to a more formal model of management and support this academic year.

What is still to come

- ▷ Trialling 12-month tenancies that allow students to plan ahead.

2. Improving our financial support offer for care-experienced and estranged students

What has been completed

- ▷ UoE collaborated with the Hub for Success (HfS) to establishing best practice and signed up to the Guiding Principles for Administration of Discretionary Funds (Scottish Government). Initial training for Student Advisers (SA) in 2022 and 2023 included high level information on funding.
- ▷ No-cost activities offered to CE/Est students, including Edinburgh Festival activities.
- ▷ The Chaplaincy offer a warm space as well as free hot beverages to students year-round.
- ▷ Open letter, written by HfS Student Ambassadors and led by UoE student, was endorsed by Advisory Board. UoE CE students met with the then First Minister advocating for the Special Loan element of current SAAS award to be included in the Care Experienced Student Bursary. SAAS Summer uplift loan allows continuing CE students to access additional financial support during the summer.
- ▷ EC team meet regularly with the Scholarship and Finance team (S&F) to improve identification of students and minimising re-telling of circumstances whilst maintaining evidence for auditing purposes.
- ▷ £250k invested in Participation Grants in academic year (AY) 2023/24. Supported students to take up study away opportunities, utilising available funding. A £950 Go Abroad scholarship to undertake short-term summer activities is also available. S&F supported students on a case-by-case basis.
- ▷ Heavy promotion of support, funding and work opportunities on offer at UoE via EC Newsletter.
- ▷ Sharing data with ResLife confirming who is staying in UoE accommodation over the summer. ResLife operate full services throughout the calendar year.

What is in progress

- ▷ Internal collaboration aims to maximise income for CE/Est students, improve identification of CE/ Est students, and to minimising re-telling of circumstances whilst maintaining evidence for auditing purposes.
- ▷ CE/Est students on credit-bearing mandatory semester/academic year-long study/work away activities receive enhanced funding through Turing/the UoE's funding underwrite (non-targeted).

What is still to come

- ▷ Analyse need vs. current offering by UoE and funding bodies. Establishing trauma informed practices throughout the assessment stage of Discretionary Fund awards and reviewing student communication and language before and throughout funding processes. Ensure appropriate training for SA.
- ▷ We aim to secure a funding source to offer CE/Est students extra financial aid towards Study Away costs (including rent, passport and visa costs).

3. Enhancing how care-experienced and estranged students navigate the university

What has been completed

- ▷ Current CE/Est verification process established and embedded within admissions process. Data on incoming/on-course CE/Est students is shared and updated as soon as possible with key staff to minimise stress and promote a smooth transition into the UoE for students. ResLife, Wellbeing Team and Wellbeing Services installed a new case management system to reduce 'retelling story'.
- ▷ Students encouraged to take up key roles within the University and feel able to share their CE/Est identity with staff and other students. CE/Est students have put themselves forward for roles within EUSA and secured employment as Student Ambassadors as well as Sutton Trust Group Leaders. They have spoken at the WP Strategy 2030 Launch and advocated, with support, at the Scottish Parliament.
- ▷ SRA EC team provides early and targeted communication to CE/Est students. EC team and Pre-arrival and Welcome team implemented check-in points to improve transition for students. Sense of Belonging Group has created a style guide for communicating with students. HfS partners collaboratively designed in-person, virtual and on-campus sessions focus on transition pathways for college students considering progression to university. Six students progressed from college to UoE since.
- ▷ Staff training focusing on what being CE/Est means and how to support these students, developed. Collaboration and communication across key teams established. SRA EC team works with Communication and Marketing (CAM) on reaching staff and students to discover and promote opportunities. Interim data sharing process with key staff and teams established.
- ▷ Staff mentoring scheme for CE/Est students well established.

What is in progress

- ▷ Staff training offered three times per year.
- ▷ Edinburgh Cares Committee reports to the University Executive and places these students' needs with key staff across UoE.
- ▷ Since 2021, SRA EC team have collaborated with internal and external aspects of the CAM team looking at branding and resources to ensure CE/Est students feel represented and have access to information.
- ▷ Opportunities for students to meet with each other offered regularly. Exploring the introduction of a Money Mentors scheme for students to gain work experience and learn from peers how to manage finances, share experiences, and promote the work we are doing.
- ▷ SRA WP team makes CE/Est applicants aware of the support on offer at UoE as part of WP outreach activity. Delivering enhanced transition sessions for three local Further Education colleges. Internal advocacy and referrals on case-by-case basis are made and largely achieving great outcomes for the student.
- ▷ Staff mentoring ongoing and number of staff mentoring pairs have grown year-on-year. 50 mentoring pairs in AY 2023/24. The offer of a staff mentor for CE/Est students is seen as the stronger offer. However, some students prefer to have a peer-mentor, and this is looked at on a case-by-case basis.

What is still to come

- ▷ Scope feasibility of admissions taking over CE-verification process, ideally for 2026 entry cycle.
- ▷ Implement for student records to automatically populate with information that CE box was ticked on UCAS. Explore possibility to add flags to the student record to highlight if student is CE/Est, a parent, or a carer. Privacy impact will need careful consideration. Ascertain how shared data is used to promote a positive experience and a culture of care for CE/Est students.
- ▷ For AY 2024/25, will explore opportunities for peer learning. We will establish whether the Institute for Academic Development would co-deliver formal peer learning opportunities.
- ▷ Fully transition to the student support model, making SA the first point of contact for CE/Est students.

4. Build a strong student community

What has been completed

- ▷ Introduction of regular social gatherings to encourage positive coping strategies for CE/Est students.
- ▷ SRA EC team provided training about the needs and potential challenges of CE/Est students to new Wellbeing Adviser (WA) and SA staff. The Listening Service is promoted to priority student groups.
- ▷ Established processes for ACE to prioritise CE/Est students and treat sensitive information with respect. ACE offered CE/Est students to be accommodated together over the summer in 2022 and 2023. CE/Est students in crisis are supported by key teams with ResLife. S&F are trained and collaborate with SRA EC team to support CE/Est students in need.
- ▷ Informed by HfS Steering Group and HfS Student Ambassadors, a collaborative project was introduced, which offers drop-ins for CE learners from across all HfS partner institutions to build connections between CE learners and with their CE named contacts.
- ▷ The Chaplaincy provided a space for CE/Est students to meet and offer a warm space as well as free hot beverages to students year-round.
- ▷ CE/Est students fed into the UoE curriculum transformation programme. Named contact main mechanism established, amplifying student issues and feedback.
- ▷ SRA/Widening Participation Peer mentor scheme & Staff Mentoring for students with care-experience established.

What is in progress

- ▷ Meetings between SRA EC and WA to support the needs of CE/Est students. CE/Est students meet at least three times a year and students' direct activities.

What is still to come

- ▷ SRA EC team to scope feasibility to formally meet with CE/Est students again, similar to the original research underpinning the current Corporate Parenting Plan, to establish how they experience UoE as corporate parents.

5. Employability and skills

What has been completed

- ▷ SRA EC team and Careers Service established delivery of regular activities and events for CE/Est students. Ongoing delivery of Edinburgh Award, a skills development programme and recognition for getting involved in activities outside of studies. In AY 2023/24, 10 CE students took part in the Careers Service's Insights Programme, which is run by the Careers Service and Development & Alumni and provides a fully funded programme of support and activities as well as networking opportunities with University alumni working in a range of sectors.
- ▷ Since 2021, 11 UoE students secured employment as HfS Student Ambassadors which provides career development. Six out of the 22 current Student Ambassadors study at UoE.
- ▷ The Chaplaincy provided bespoke activities to encourage positive coping strategies related to stress management.
- ▷ Development and careers related opportunities are promoted via EC newsletter.

What is in progress

- ▷ Targeting WP students, including CE/Est students, for the Edinburgh Award, a skills development programme and recognition for getting involved in activities outside of studies.

6. Development of applicant supporter resources and training

What has been completed

- ▷ Updated The Advice Place and Edinburgh Cares web pages, the latter including a new animation video.
- ▷ Since 2022, dedicated talks and drop-in sessions have been delivered and are now embedded as part of the Open Day experience as well as arrivals weekend.
- ▷ HfS increased their presence through the 'Through Care After Care' office. All HfS partner institutions collaborated on the We Care Fest win 2023/24, offering 10 drop-in sessions open to students supporters and children.

What is in progress

- ▷ Resources created with students for Social Workers, Teachers, and kinship carers to be created in AY 2024/25.

What is still to come

- ▷ Hub for Success will work in partnership with University of Edinburgh on Steering Group and Advisory Board to have a clearer presence within Edinburgh Council and Local Authority.
- ▷ Web resources targeted at social workers, teachers, supporters, and kinship carers in AY 2024/25.

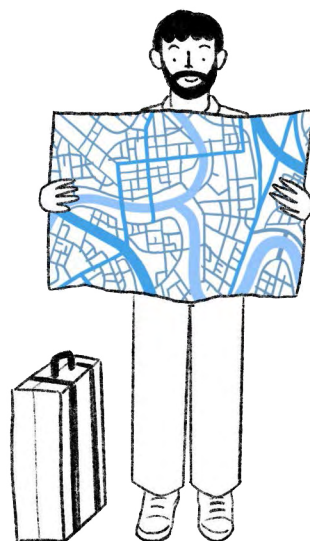
7. Development of student body and staff resources and training building on previous professional services framework resources.

What has been completed

- ▷ Training has been developed and rolled out to staff across the University. Bespoke training for small sub teams has also been delivered. Facilitated talks about trauma informed practices.
- ▷ UoE staff members are active and regular attendees of the Care Experienced, Estranged, Carers East Forum, a forum for Further and Higher Education practitioners, establishing links with public and third sector organisations, and remaining up to date with national policies, practices and initiatives.

What is in progress

- ▷ EC Team is further developing Corporate Parenting Training for UoE staff.



Appendix 2 - Context & Glossary

The University of Edinburgh's Corporate Parenting Plan 2022-2027 outlines our strategy and priorities for the upcoming years. [The full plan is available on our website.](#)

[The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) came into effect on 1 April 2015. Part 9 of the Act names 24 public bodies and groups of bodies, including Universities, as corporate parents. Under section 58, the University, as a designated corporate parent, has certain statutory duties with regard to the wellbeing of care experienced students.

These include the following:

- (a) be alert to matters which, or which might, adversely affect the wellbeing of children and young people to whom this Part applies,
- (b) assess the needs of those children and young people for services and support it provides,
- (c) promote the interests of those children and young people,
- (d) seek to provide those children and young people with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing,
- (e) take such action as it considers appropriate to help those children and young people: (i) access opportunities it provides in pursuance of paragraph (d), and (ii) make use of services, and access support, which it provides, and
- (f) take such other action as it considers appropriate for the purposes of improving the way in which it exercises its functions in relation to those children and young people.

External Collaborators

- ▷ [Hub for Success](#)
- ▷ [Who Cares? Scotland](#)
- ▷ [Stand Alone](#)

Red-Amber-Green Rating Criteria

- ▷ **Red** = issues in delivering the action
- ▷ **Amber** = minor issues but making progress
- ▷ **Green** = on track and making good progress

Acronyms

ACE : Accommodation, Catering and Events
AY : Academic Year (September-August)
CAM : Communication and Marketing
CE : Care-experienced
Est : Estranged
EUCLID : Edinburgh University Complete Lifecycle Integrated Development (student online application system and record hub)
EUSA : Edinburgh University Students' Association
GaSP : Governance and Strategic Planning
HfS : Hub for Success
PSG : priority student group(s)

ResLife : Residence Life
SA : Student Advisers
SAAS : Student Awards Agency Scotland
S&F : Scholarship and Funding team
SRA : Student Recruitment and Admissions
UCAS : Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UoE : University of Edinburgh
WA : Wellbeing Advisers
WP : Widening Participation

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