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for Education

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Dear Virtual School Head

I am writing to you ahead of A Level results day on Thursday 13 August to make you aware of helpful information available for care leavers planning to progress into higher education this year.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your continued support for care leavers during this unprecedented time. Your dedication and hard work helps to improve opportunities for children and young people in care as they transition into their adult lives.

Higher education opens the door to a wealth of new and exciting possibilities, and I am determined to ensure care leavers wishing to study for a degree are well-informed about the support available to them. That is why I am asking you to point people in your care towards two helpful resources tailored to care leavers entering higher education:

- [Propel](#) is an online tool for care leavers, providing information on the support available at colleges and universities across the UK. The website includes whether 365-day accommodation is available; what bursaries and grants are on offer; the help and support care leavers can expect; and the details of specific contacts to get in touch with at each institution.

Become, the charity that runs Propel, also provides the [Care Advice Line](#) which will be open as normal from 10am to 5pm on results day for any care leavers who have questions about higher education and what they are entitled to.

- UCAS provides a specific area on their website detailing [undergraduate support for care leavers](#), including information to help with finance, settling in, and accommodation.

UCAS will also be running a series of live 'Results Day Shows' via the UCAS Facebook account, which will be an opportunity for care leavers to get real-time online contact with experts to get questions answered about their university applications. The first show will take place on Wednesday 12 August at 16:00-17:00 and there will be other sessions on results day: Thursday 13 August at 07:30-08:30 and 12:00-13:00.

Universities Minister, Michelle Donelan, will be part of Wednesday's show at 16:00 and Thursday's show at 07:30. The live shows will be recorded and

available on the UCAS Facebook account after the session.

If a care leaver is thinking about higher education and has not started an application, they will have until 20 October 2020 to submit an application through the [Clearing route](#). This year, UCAS is also offering [Clearing Plus](#), an additional service that aims to match students to courses based on interest and availability. It takes into account the course a student had originally applied for and analyses what students have gone on to study in previous years. Unplaced students are then instantly presented with matched opportunities to explore.

I am grateful to you for your help in flagging this information to the right people in your care and hope it will help them with overcoming some of the barriers they may face in entering higher education, particularly in terms of their levels of aspiration and concerns over the affordability of taking a degree. Thank you again for your help with this and the work you do throughout the year.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Bicknell

Department for Education Deputy Director
Widening Participation and Student Experience