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# SUPPORTING YOUNG INDEPENDENT PEOPLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION



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## **NATIONAL CONTEXT AND RISKS ADDRESSED:**

**ALIGNMENT WITH OFS  
PRIORITIES AND EOR  
REGISTER**



**University of  
East London**

Care-experienced students remain one of the most underrepresented groups in higher education.

They face persistent barriers around access, continuation, and attainment compared with their peers.

National policy recognises the need for targeted support to reduce these inequalities.



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# INTRODUCTION TO THE YIS PROGRAMME

- **Part of Student Money Advice and Rights Team (SMART), Sector-leading cross-sector collaboration.**
- **Supporting vulnerable student groups;** care leavers, estranged students, refugees, and young carers.
- **Aim:** Tackling barriers - financial, social, emotional - with the aim of improving retention, completion, progression.

# YIS PROGRAMME - LIFECYCLE OF SUPPORT

## Pre-Entry Engagement

- Early Identification
- Specialist IAG support /Course guidance
- Free short courses for low income and care-leavers

## Enrolment & Induction

- Comprehensive welcome packages
- 365 Accommodation guarantee/Transition to university halls
- Awareness raising

## Engagement & Retention

- Weekly attendance tracking
- Drop-in sessions
- Support and Interventions

## Graduation & Progression

- Career Zone
- Guaranteed Interviews for Care Leavers
- Graduation Bursary

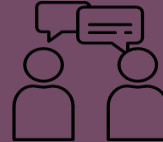
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# PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS

Bursaries



Student Finance Advice



STRAP (Student Retention Analytic Project): Weekly monitoring of attendance and grades

External Partnerships



Pastoral support



Drop-in sessions and social events





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# EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

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**Care Leaver Covenant:** formal employer commitments supporting care-experienced graduates.

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**CareTech Foundation:** work experience placements and financial support.

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**Local Authorities:** community links and tailored outreach.

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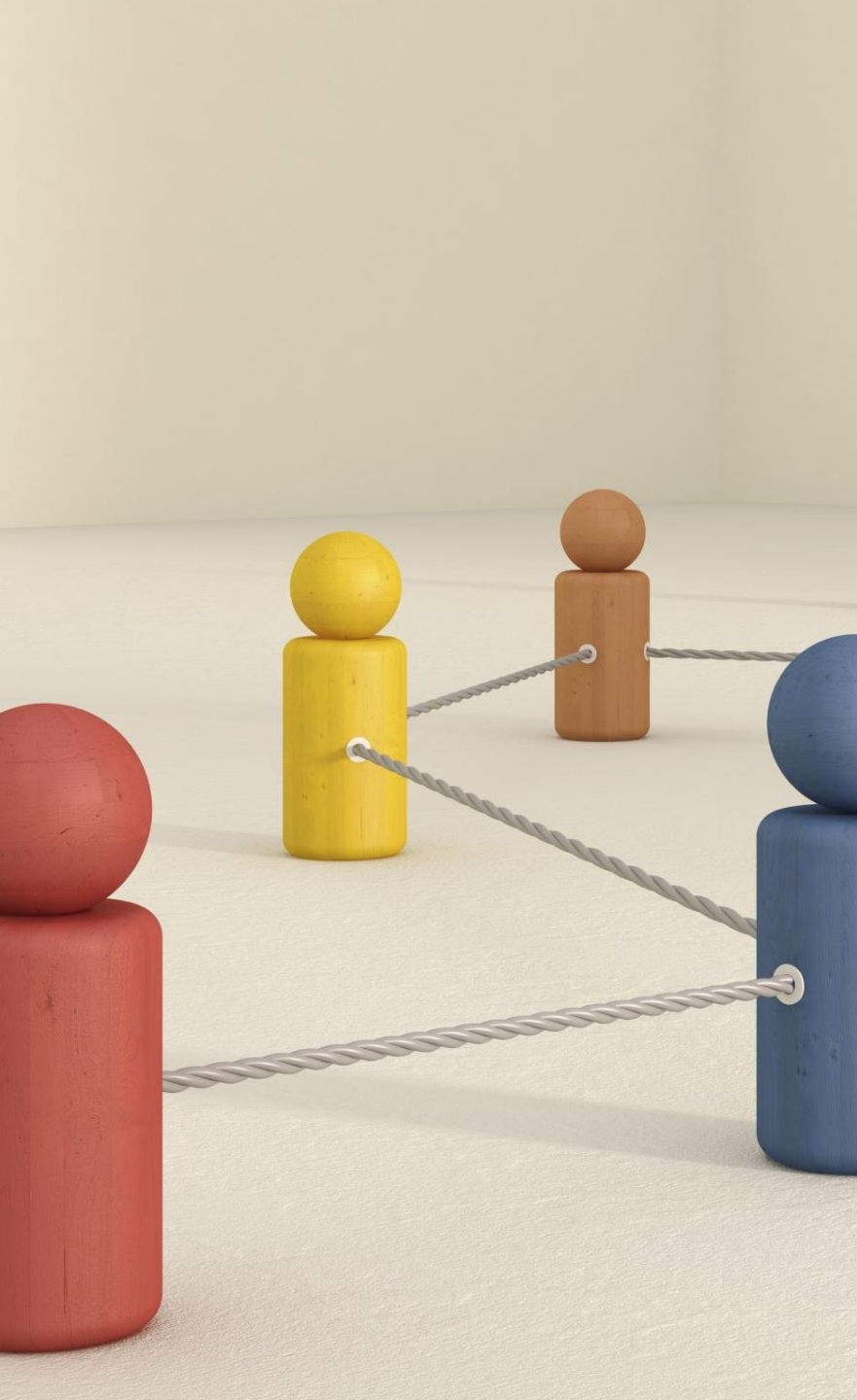
**Blackbullion:** online financial education and budgeting resources.

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**Citizens Advice:** independent financial and legal guidance.

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# INTERNAL COLLABORATIONS

- **Wellbeing Services** provide consistent pastoral and mental health care, ensuring students feel supported emotionally and academically.
  - **The Career Zone** prepares students for future employment through tailored advice, career coaching, and graduate pathways.
  - **STRAP** (Student Retention Analytic Project): **In collaboration with the SERT team**, weekly monitoring of attendance and grades to offer early interventions.
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So...

The Office for Students noted within their guidance that:

"We also expect a provider **to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the activity** it delivers through its plan, and work to ensure that the learning from such evaluation effect both its own and other providers' work on equality of opportunity."

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# OUTCOME /IMPACT EVALUATION: 2023/24



7% of pre-entry students who engaged in outreach initiatives identified as care experienced.



£177,000 was awarded to 162 students.



78% continuation/completion rate compared to 69% institutional average (52% year-on-year improvement).



40% 1st class degree rate for care leavers.

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# IMPACT AND EVALUATION: QUALITATIVE

"Helped me be under **less financial stress**. Then rippled out into helping overall stress levels."

"It has made it a **better experience** because it helped me get through financial difficulty and **focus on my studies...**"

"It allowed me to work a lot less which in turn allowed me to **focus more on my studies** getting me a 1<sup>st</sup> in my second year."

"It made me **focus on my studies** more and not worry about my finances"

"Made it so I can actually **attend**"

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“The financial support is a big help, but also the **constant checks to ensure you are in a right place** really helps.”

“The support I received financially not only supports me but **helps eliminate the difference in wealth** between myself and those who are more fortunate in terms of the effect on my studies.”

## ON SENSE OF BELONGING:





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## STRATEGIC LEARNING AND FUTURE DIRECTION:

- Wraparound support (wellbeing, employability, mentoring) is essential.
  - Collaboration across internal and external partners amplifies impact.
  - Early engagement and proactive communication improve uptake and retention.
  - Postgraduate Care Leaver Scholarship
  - University of Sanctuary award
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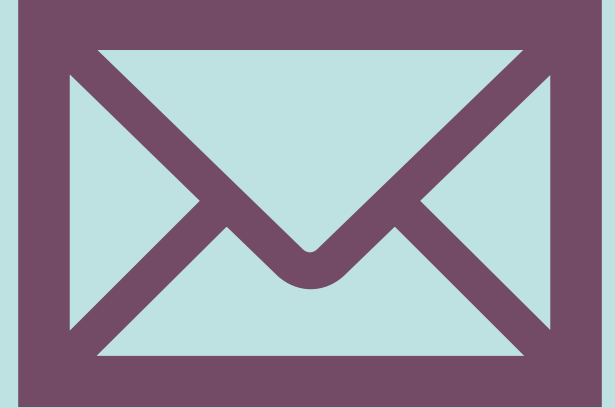
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# QUESTIONS & CONTACT DETAILS:



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