

CELCIS transcript

Embedded support for university

Peter Tormey, Edinburgh Napier University

The Corporate parenting policy at Edinburgh Napier (university), it's currently ongoing. So, we've got a first draft and we have some practices in place and but we're still looking to develop to have what we hope is the most widespread, embedded support available for students coming from a care background into the university.

Predominantly, I think my role as a corporate parent, is to provide the support that any parent would give to a child going to university, and that for me starts right back at the application stage. So any student who self-declares on a UCAS application that they are care experienced, I will contact them before a decision is made, before their offers come in for the university to see if they want to come in and do a tour, see the facilities, so they're fully informed of what it's like to go to university and are familiar and comfortable in the surroundings. We can also signpost to support and counselling and also financial support that the university has to offer.

Accommodation is a big issue with students who are care experienced, as they may not have a home to go back to during their term time and once they leave care or start university. The university is a Unite Scholarship partner. So I help prepare students to submit an application to be a United Scholar which covers full fee-waived accommodation for three years of study. That's a big part of my role pre-entry.

For students who start university, as a corporate parent I help support them in whatever ways they would like. For example, the transitional support - maybe sitting down and talking about what the timetable is like. Often the students who are care experienced maybe first generation, or maybe first in their family ever to go to university. They may come via college route, and when they set out as a youngster, or as a school leaver, they may have never envisaged that they would actually go to university. So as part of a transition support, I'll sit down and we'll have a discussion about what a module is how you can access your timetable well in advance. So in week one or week two of university that the students feel supported in the transition and they're comfortable that they know what the expectations are, they know that it is different university.

Independent learning is the ethos. I really focus in on that and what that actually means in practice being prepared for your lectures, timetabling your modules and your assessments and exams. Ultimately then, trying to build a relationship that's trusting, so that if obstacles or issues do arise, which is very commonplace a university that they feel that they can approach me to help rectify that and help signpost them to the support that they may need. The support by providers, a corporate parent and the name contact for care experience students. It is weighted towards the first year, particularly the first few weeks in the first semester of university.

But I do keep in touch with our students throughout their stay at university, whether that's two years or four years. Last year, we had two Masters students in our university as well. I keep in touch with them. And they just tend to be a natural lessening of the reliance or more of a natural relationship develops when it maybe become more informal as students develop and progress to the second and third and fourth year of studies where it becomes a little bit more sociable. But again, having a trusting relationship so that if issues do arise, whether it's exam stress, or issues with personal life or work commitments, I'm there to provide transitional support and ongoing support in most cases.

©CELCIS