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Russell Group Support for Care Leavers and Care- Experienced Students

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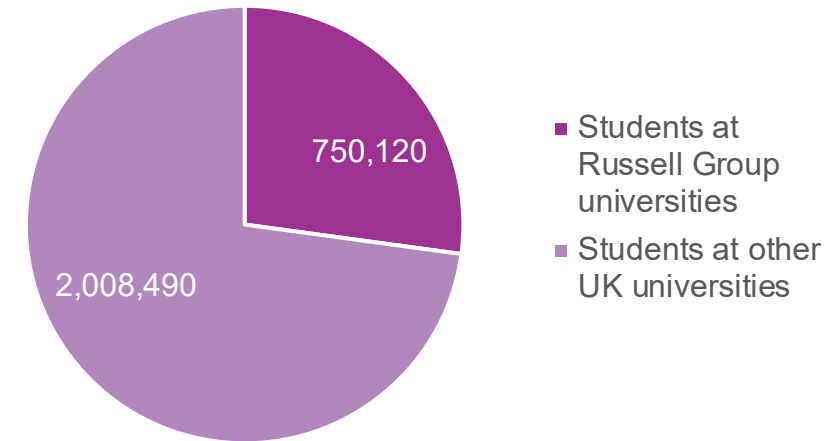
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A (brief) background on Russell Group Universities

Russell Group Universities are large comprehensive universities which cover a wide range of disciplines, and each will have their own strengths.

Russell Group universities teach:

- Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million students in the UK
- 3 in 4 doctors and dentists
- More than a third of all engineers
- More than 50% of all physical scientists and mathematicians



- **Student satisfaction:** over 80% of final year students were happy with the teaching on their course in 2021
- **Low dropout rate:** only 4.1% of Russell Group students choose not to continue to the second year
- **High UK graduate employment:** 84% of Russell Group graduates were in highly skilled employment 15 months after graduating

The Russell Group is not just a group of universities; we are also a policy organisation!


As a mission group, we work with government and other education stakeholders (e.g. the Office for Students) to champion issues that impact our universities, their students and the wider Higher Education sector. These include:

- Fair Admissions
- Widening Participation and Access
- Research Security
- International Students and Visas
- Higher Education Funding



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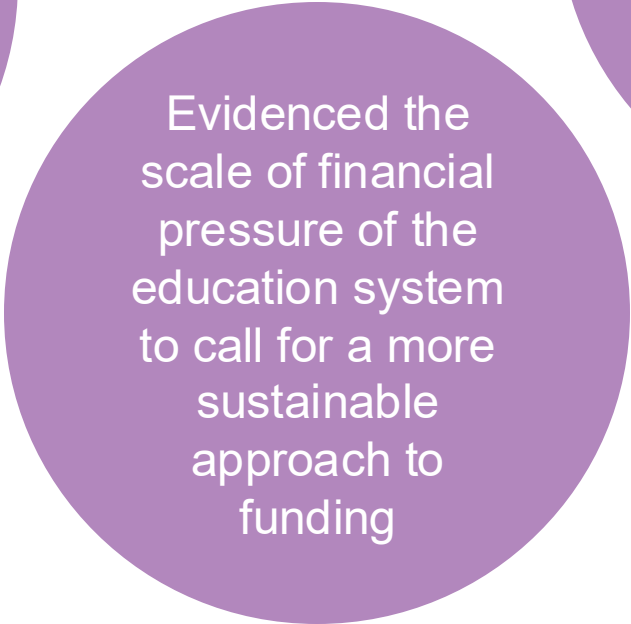
Some things we have done in recent years include:



Advocate for an increase in maintenance loans and the reintroduction of maintenance grants for students



Made an economic and social case for keeping the Graduate Route for international students



Evidenced the scale of financial pressure of the education system to call for a more sustainable approach to funding



Engage with UCAS to make sure university admission works for our members and prospective students

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Advancing Access

Advancing Access is a partnership between all 24 Russell Group universities working with schools and colleges to support students' progression to Russell Group universities.

Advancing Access has a page tailored to CPD resources to help Advisers and Teachers support care-experienced students to access university. Additionally, the website features key links to all Russell Group universities, allowing them to explore the support on offer in more detail.



Learn more here



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Top universities pledge more support for care leavers to widen access to courses

The Russell Group has set out a plan to improve the transparency and consistency of contextual offers to remove barriers for prospective students.

Eleanor Busby • Wednesday 04 June 2025 00:01 BST



In July 2025, Russell Group universities committed to all offering a support package for care leavers, with a view to expanding this offer for care-experienced and estranged students.

This package includes...

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Accommodation Support

What is it? Accommodation support for care leavers means the university supports you in having a safe, stable place to live while you study. This might look like guaranteed year-round accommodation, reduced or supported rent, and/or acting as a rent-guarantor.

At Russell Group universities, this might look like:

University of Birmingham – Priority choice of University accommodation with no prepayment to secure the accommodation and a complimentary welcome package including bedding, saucepans and other useful products.

King's College London – Eligibility for the King's Affordable Accommodation Scheme (KAAS), which caps the price of eligible accommodation provided by King's to £169 per week.

Many Russell Group members – Support through the Unite Foundation Scholarship, which covers the cost of accommodation and bills for up to 3 years at university in certain accommodations.



Financial Support and/or Bursaries

What is it? Financial support or bursaries for care leavers and care-experienced students provide extra help with the costs of university life. This can include assistance with rent, bills, food, travel, study materials, or unexpected expenses. These funds do not need to be repaid. Some support is awarded automatically once you are identified as care-experienced, while additional grants may be available through an application. The aim is to reduce financial pressure, support your wellbeing, and ensure you can fully engage with your studies and wider university opportunities.

At Russell Group universities, this might look like:

University of Southampton – Care-experienced (and estranged) students receive welcome packs containing vouchers and other essentials to help them settle in, in addition to a £2,000 per year bursary.

London School of Economics– Alongside the LSE Undergraduate Bursary Scheme (bursary of up to £4,250 per year), care-experienced and estranged students are eligible for a specific bursary of £1,000 per year of study (up to 4 years).

University of Oxford – A non-repayable care-experienced student bursary of up to £3,500 per year is available to UK undergraduate, Graduate-Entry Medicine students and PGCE students.

Contextual Admissions

What is it? Contextual admissions are university admissions processes which allow for the consideration of an applicant's educational, personal and socioeconomic background alongside their academic achievements, to promote fairer access to higher education. By recognising that opportunities and attainment can be shaped by wider circumstances, universities use contextual data to inform a more rounded view of each applicant's potential to succeed.

Every university will use different information to inform their contextual admissions policy. There will be different outcomes of this consideration based on each university's own policies. This will be clearly explained on their website.

At Russell Group universities, this might look like:

Imperial College London – Depending on your course choice, a care leaver may qualify for a guaranteed interview or offer at Imperial, where they meet the minimum entry requirement and their admissions test score meets the department's thresholds.

University of Leeds – A student who is care-experienced may be eligible for Access to Leeds, which offers support before and during university, as well as the opportunity to study an undergraduate degree with entry requirements up to two grades lower than a standard offer.

All Russell Group members – Use contextual data in the decision-making process, meaning they consider your application in the context of your experiences.

That is why you should **tick the box!**



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The 24 Russell Group Universities

University of Birmingham

University of Bristol

University of Cambridge

Cardiff University

Durham University

University of Edinburgh

University of Exeter

University of Glasgow

Imperial College London

King's College London

University of Leeds

University of Liverpool

London School of Economics

University of Manchester

Newcastle University

University of Nottingham

University of Oxford

Queen Mary University of London

Queen's University Belfast

University of Sheffield

University of Southampton

University College London

University of Warwick

University of York

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