Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Care Leavers

1. Purpose
   1.1 To set out principles and procedures for the management of applications for admission to the University of Edinburgh from care leavers.

2. Definitions
   2.1 Background in care - anyone who has been in the care of a local authority for at least 13 weeks, whether away from home or in the home, will be considered to have a background in care, and therefore be eligible for support.

   2.2 Care leaver - A person aged 25 or under who ceased to be looked after by a local authority on, or at any time after, their sixteenth birthday (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).

3. Policy
   3.1 Care leavers and those with a background in care are amongst the most under-represented groups in Higher Education.

   3.2 The University of Edinburgh is committed to supporting all those with a background in care to benefit from degree level study. Applicants who indicate in their application that they have a background in care will be eligible to receive support in the form of advice, accommodation guarantees, and help to access any appropriate bursaries and grants.

   3.3 In addition, the University of Edinburgh aims to offer a place to any care leaver (see definition above) who meets the minimum entry requirements for the course to which they have applied, where this is possible.

   3.4 These principles apply to applications for undergraduate study only.

4. Procedure
   4.1 Applications will be screened as normal to ensure an applicant has met, or is predicted to meet, the minimum entry requirements for the course to which he/she has applied.
4.2 Following screening, any applicant who has met, or is predicted to meet, the minimum requirements, and who has also ticked the “in care” box on the UCAS application form, will be contacted by the College/School admissions office. This will be a standard communication (see Appendix 1) which will explain the arrangements for special consideration of applications from care leavers. The applicant will be asked to provide evidence that they meet the definition of a care leaver (in the form of a letter from their social worker or head teacher) if they wish their application to be considered under these arrangements. There will be a 21 day deadline for this evidence to be received.

4.3 If the evidence is received, the applicant will receive an offer based on the minimum entry requirements, where possible.

4.4 If the confirmation letter is not received by the deadline and the applicant has not contacted the admissions office to discuss any difficulties, or if the applicant has informed the admissions office that they do not meet the definition of a care leaver, then the application will be considered through the standard process.

4.5 All applicants who have ticked the “in care” box on the UCAS application form and who receive an offer from the University of Edinburgh will receive a letter from the SRA Widening Participation team directing them to the support available e.g. accommodation, financial support and student support services.

Policy approved: October 2013

Policy updated: November 2015
Dear (applicant’s name)

Special consideration of applications from care leavers

You have indicated on your UCAS application that you have been in care, and this may entitle you to special consideration within the admissions process.

As part of our commitment to support applicants from a care background, wherever possible the University of Edinburgh aims to make an offer to any applicant who meets our definition of a “care leaver” and who has achieved, or is predicted to achieve, the entry requirements for the course he/she has applied to.

Our definition of a care leaver is:

“a person aged 25 or under who ceased to be looked after by a local authority on, or at any time after, their sixteenth birthday (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014) “

If you believe that you meet this definition and you would like us to consider your application under these arrangements, we require evidence in the form of a letter signed by one of the following:

- your social worker / local authority social work department
- your head teacher / local authority education department

The letter should be on headed paper with clear contact details for the person making the declaration, and must confirm your full name, date of birth, and the dates that you have been in local authority care away from home.

If you would like any further information, or if you have any problems in providing the evidence required, please do not hesitate to contact me. However, if I have not heard from you within 21 days of the date of this letter and I have not received the evidence required, I will assume you do not wish your application to be considered under the special arrangements and it will then proceed through the normal selection process.

Whether or not your application is considered under the special arrangements for applications from care leavers, you will still be eligible for a range of support during your time at the University of Edinburgh. If you accept an offer from the University, we will send you details of the support we offer to students from a care background, which includes a 365-day accommodation guarantee and help with applying for grant funding and bursaries.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

Admissions Officer