

Leapskills

Parent/Carer Resource



As the UK's largest student accommodation provider, we like to think that we know young people and our research tells us that parents and teenagers are on different wavelengths about how ready they are for living independently. While teenagers are giving themselves A* grades for their life skills, parents are handing out Cs!

Many of the young people living with us arrive through our doors feeling extremely overwhelmed and unprepared for what it's like to be a student or live independently for the first time. You can see what we mean by watching this short video [here](#).

Expectations about university life don't always match the realities, but sometimes the easiest way to better prepare is to talk about it. To date we have supported nearly 2000 young people, in classrooms and our properties, to have these conversations through our Leapskills programme. With the current school closures, we have developed a free parent-friendly version that can be delivered to your young person in the comfort of your home. All you need is an internet connection!

Leapskills has been designed to shed some light on what student life is like; promoting conversations at home and developing conflict resolution skills to help make independent living a more positive experience from the outset.

The resource is a mix of real-life scenarios brought to life by a digital game, student insight shared by video content and discussion points all designed to help 17-18 year olds prepare for the 'leap'. Feedback has been extremely positive, with the resource even receiving an endorsement from the Department of Education!

With almost half of 6th formers feeling unprepared to live with people they've not met before we feel this resource is a valuable tool.

The above research has been taken from [The Leap](#), a short report, where parents and prospective students across the UK shared what they need and expect from student life and accommodation. You can access the full report [here](#).



The concept is great and really valuable to students. It's an area we don't really cover so I would definitely use this resource again

(Teacher)

91%

of educators thought that the Leapskills session adds value to their UCAS programme

96%

of students were engaged

91%

of teachers said they'd recommend the Leapskills session to a colleague

Only 55% of the parents of 16-19 year olds polled think that their child is able to cook a meal from scratch on their own, but 78% of teenagers are confident they can.

72% of the parents polled think it is likely that they will expect to lend money to their children before the end of the first term, but only 33% of teenagers expect to borrow from their parents – and 80% of teenagers are confident they can manage their money.

9% of students say their higher education experience closely matches their prior expectations with 81% of applicants reporting feeling excited about going to university and 61% of applicants feeling anxious.



Brilliant, really needed, students worry a lot about this type of thing so it has helped put their minds at ease and educate them

(Teacher)

Activities

This session will help young people think further about what is ahead and develop the skills to meet these challenges. To open up the discussion share your first experience of moving out of home with them; what was it like and were there any surprises?

Now take a look at what student accommodation looks like today, by doing a virtual tour here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr-rz8DOKR8>

Is this much different from your first place? Share a description/photo.

Activity One Living independently

Both parties to list 5 meals they believe their young person can cook. Compare- is there a disagreement? Try making one for tonight's dinner for the household!

What issues may occur living with a stranger? Discuss the potential outcomes and share any stories about previous flatmates you have shared a home with both good and bad.

Extra questions

What is the price of a litre of milk? How often will you wash your sheets once you move out of home?

This discussion should strengthen the point that they may not be fully prepared for the 'leap' towards independence.

Resources

- Online virtual tour - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xr-rz8DOKR8>
- Online game 'Are you ready for The Leap?' - <https://leapskills.unitestudents.com/students>
- Activity sheet – Solution Focus (found at the bottom of this document)
- Online video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=nuhXOEduzzo
- The Common Room, our students advice forum - <https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room>

Activities

Activity three Finding Solutions

Work through the activity sheet – Solution Focus at the bottom of this document.

The messaging to stress here is that a good way of dealing with any challenge is to focus on finding a solution. Point out the 'I' in 'What can I do about it?' – they have the power to change any situation. It's best to focus on the actions they can take, rather than dwelling on what others should be doing. Share that this is an important skill in the world of work too – employers want employees to be 'solution-focused'.

Independent Tasks

- Young person to research and compare two university websites of their choice for information on clubs/societies and student support services.
- Finally select a university of interest and research the different accommodation options that are available to first year students, paying attention to cost and location.

Make sure to check out our Common Room, a student advice forum with lots of support, ideas and tips.

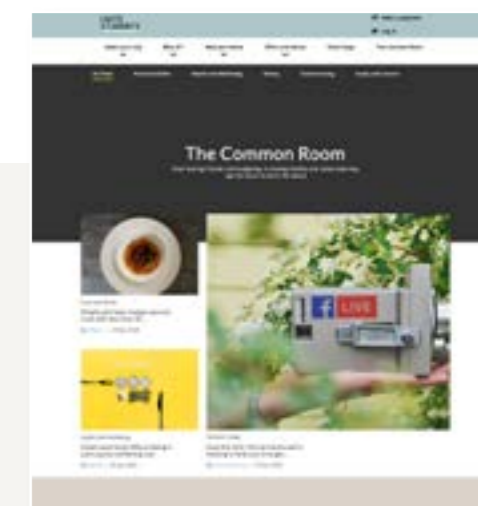
You can visit here
<https://www.unitestudents.com/the-common-room>

Activity four Finding support

Together listen to some of our current students sharing top tips here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=nuhXOEduzzo

Thinking about the advice they've shared to help together design a 'support web'. This is a list of all the potential sources of support currently and soon to be available.

Suggestions could include: parents, relatives, friends, flatmates, social clubs, teachers/lecturers, counsellors, university support services, other support services (e.g. Childline or Samaritans).



Activity Sheet

Solution Focus

Read through the potential scenarios, which a young person might face when living away from home for the first time. For each, think about what the person involved could do to step towards a solution. Write your suggestion in the right-hand box.

Tip – your solution could involve:

- Communicating your feelings
- Changing your attitude or behaviour
- Setting goals for yourself
- Reaching out for help or advice – think about who could support

There is space for you to add your own scenarios and solutions.

Potential scenario	What can I do about it?
"I'm worried about a big exam next week. I haven't started studying. What if I fail it completely?"	"I can only do my best. I'll make sure I get some work done every evening and then I'll feel more prepared."
"I'm finding it really difficult to know how much money I'm spending. I always run out and have to wait until I get paid again. My friends go out, but I can't afford to."	
"My flatmates and I used to socialise a lot. Now it seems I'm the only one trying to organise dinner or keep the flat tidy, and some of my flatmates just aren't ever here or sit in their room the whole time."	
"I find my flatmate's behaviour really irritating. We have very different personalities."	