

WHO CARES? SCOTLAND



EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE

Applying for the Care Experienced Bursary

Robbie's story: a case
study



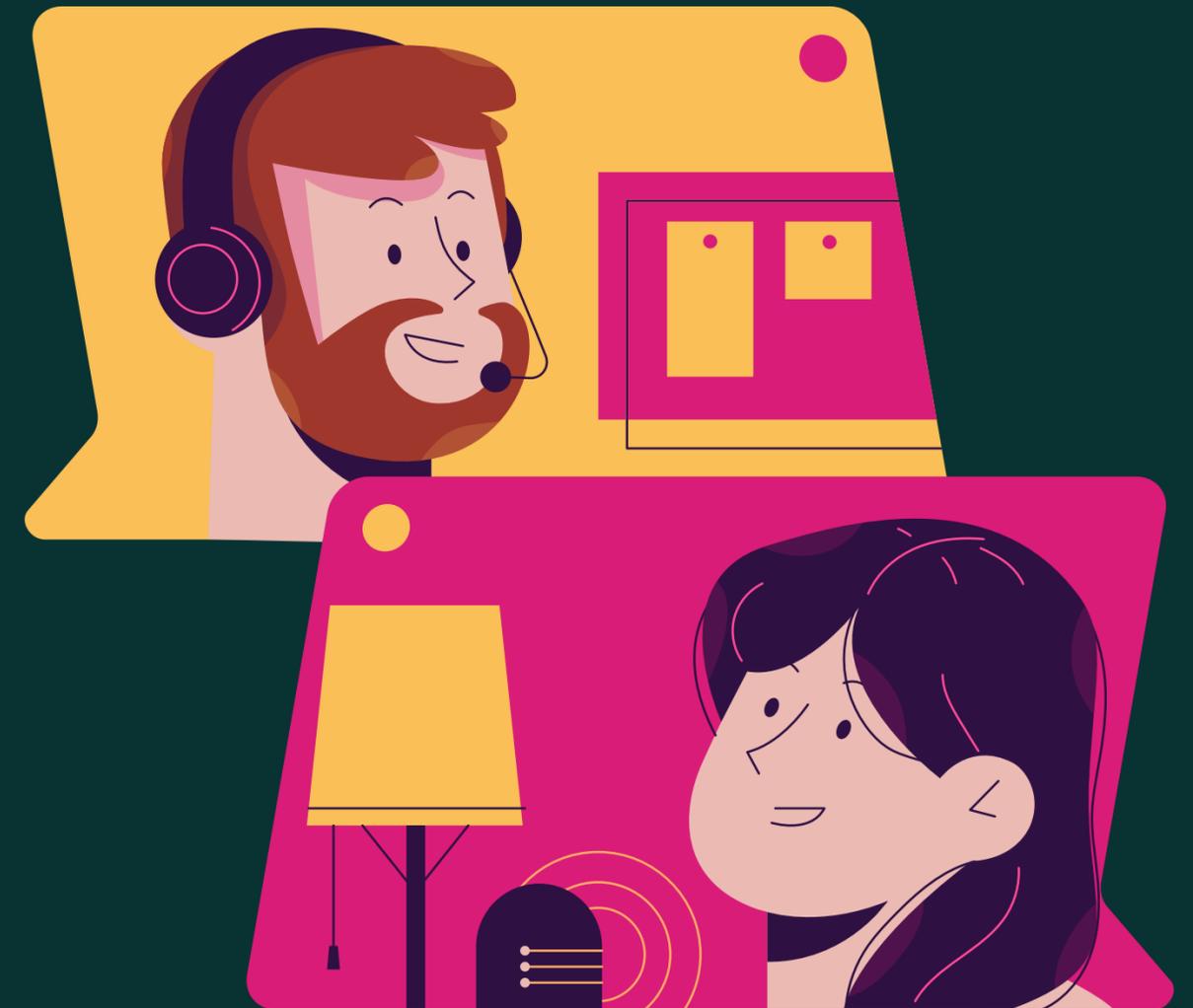
Hello, SAAS!

SAAS have a hugely important role in connecting students and prospective students to the financial supports which make studying at college and university possible.

For those students who are Care Experienced, it's no different, you are a crucial network of skilled professionals working on the front lines. You clear the path and ensure a level playing field for all, where everyone gets what they need to thrive.

We know that there is lots of incredible work being done by SAAS in supporting students with Care Experience.

We also know that is with any organisation, agency or service provider, there is always room to improve. This case study is designed to challenge you. This is a real story from a real Care Experienced student's perspective. We ask you to consider and reflect on how important you are, both as individuals and as a collective, in the lives of Care Experienced people.



Meet Robbie.

Robbie is Care Experienced. He has experience of living in kinship care and of being looked after at home.

Kinship care is where a young person lives with another family member – for example their grandparent, auntie or uncle – or close friends, who care for them as a parent would.

Being looked after at home means staying at home with family, but with support from a social worker.

Robbie started college this year.

He is now enrolled, and already busy with college work. He has his SAAS funding in place and has been approved for the Care Experienced bursary.



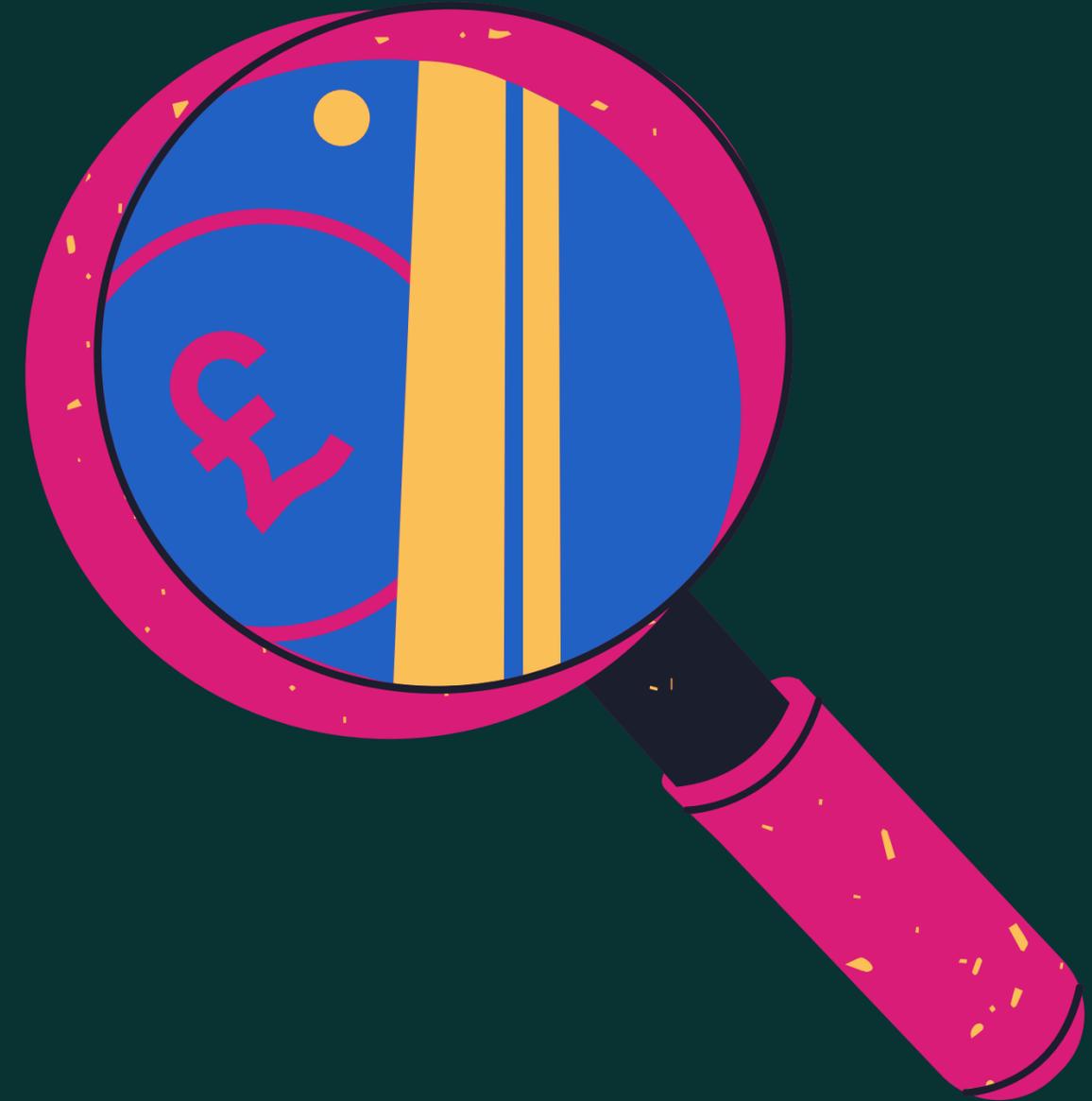
The Bursary

When we go to college or university, many of us take out repayable student loans and may also receive financial support from parents and family, to help to pay for food, accommodation, textbooks, travel, socialising and making sure that we can take part in all aspects of student life.

The Scottish Government introduced a non-repayable bursary for students with Care Experience in 2017-18.

The bursary was introduced in response to evidence that **financial problems** and the accompanying **stress and worry** was a major barrier for Care Experienced people hoping to study at college and university.

For Care Experienced people, the bursary promotes **equity and inclusion**, ensuring that students with Care Experience can access the same opportunities as their non-Care Experienced peers.



Robbie's Story

When Robbie contacted SAAS about the Care Experienced bursary, the member of staff did not have enough information about the different types of care setting, and so told Robbie that he is not Care Experienced. This took a real toll on Robbie's mental health. He doubted himself, questioning his identity and validity as a Care Experienced person.

He worries that for other Care Experienced people - this could stop them from applying for support from other services in future, and may even discourage them from going to college or university after all.

It can be difficult to remember the different types of care setting, but it's hugely important in acknowledging the range of experiences which shape a Care Experienced person's life, and ensuring that they receive the support they are entitled to.

Can you remember what each of the following types of care setting mean? Take two minutes to see what you can come up with as a group - answers are on the next page.

- Foster care
- Kinship care
- Residential care
- Compulsory supervision order (looked after at home)
- Compulsory supervision order (looked after away from home)



Care Settings

Here are some simple definitions for each type of care setting. Sometimes, a Care Experienced person doesn't know that they are Care Experienced. These terms can feel like jargon. Robbie himself didn't recognise the term 'kinship care'. It's a good idea to be ready to explain these terms in an accessible way, avoiding jargon and empowering Care Experienced people to access life-changing support they may not even realise they are entitled to.

- **Foster care** - living with foster carers, on a short-term or long-term basis.
- **Kinship care** - living with extended family, neighbours or family friends.
- **Residential care** - living in a residential care home with other Care Experienced people.
- **Compulsory supervision order (looked after at home)** - staying at home with family, but with support from social services.
- **Compulsory supervision order (looked after away from home)** - living outside of the family home, cared for by foster or kinship carers, prospective adopters, in residential care homes, residential schools or secure units.

Robbie's Story

Robbie was asked to provide evidence of his Care Experience, beyond the typical evidence form, which is brief and requires a signature from a professional person.

Robbie was asked for additional paperwork, and shared documents which contained highly sensitive information relating to traumatic events in his life, in order to validate his identity as a Care Experienced person.

It was very difficult for Robbie and his family to revisit and share the events in these documents. It took a huge toll on them emotionally.

Robbie felt as though the application process placed barriers in his path which made it more difficult for him to receive his award, rather than removing barriers and making it easy for him to access the support he is entitled to. He felt as though the decision had been made that he was not entitled, before the conversation had truly begun.



Brainstorming

Now that you have heard a little about Robbie's experience, we'd love for you to take some time now to discuss what could be done differently. This is a space to discuss what you need to be able to support Care Experienced people in the best possible way.

Please record your answers on Padlet by clicking [here](#).

- Based on Robbie's story, and your own knowledge and expertise, what are your top tips for SAAS colleagues - now and in the future - for best supporting Care Experienced people?
- Do you have any ideas for what SAAS could do as an organisation moving forward to make sure you feel confident in best supporting Care Experienced people?

Learn more...

If you would like to learn more about the impact of the Care Experienced bursary on the lives of Care Experienced people, read some more of our case studies:

- [Josh's Learner Journey](#)
- [Jeanette's Learner Journey](#)
- [Rebecca's Learner Journey](#)
- [Leanne's Learner Journey](#)

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