

# PARENT AND CARER CASE STUDY

## Stella

### How you felt about your young person going to university

It is quite a while ago now since our youngest daughter went to university. It means I'm in a good position to see the bigger picture of how she has benefitted from the experience and education she received. I have an overview of what was successful and what could have been better in her case. I can see how she is able to apply what she learnt in this part of her Higher Education journey.

### What benefits you feel they have/will have going to university

The benefits of going to university are huge.

- Transferable skills are a major benefit such as presentation skills, critical thinking, research skills, developing self-awareness and promoting self-confidence, collaboration skills and providing factual evidence when expressing a point of view, in a variety of ways, to back up what you say e.g. using primary and secondary source materials effectively. Learning to listen to others and appropriate ways of responding. Provides networking opportunities for the future.
- Developing a greater depth of knowledge in their chosen field. Developing subject related technical skills.
- Meeting, learning and living with people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures.
- Meeting and making lifelong friends.
- A chance to experiment and try out things they might never have the opportunity to do if they didn't go to university e.g. enrichment, extra-curricular opportunities and work placements.
- Experience of working with academic's expert in their field.
- Springboard to employment matched to their skills and experience.

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Unfortunately learning for the love of learning seems to have fallen by the wayside. Preparation for the world of work is understandably a crucial component of the education process but in my opinion should not be at the expense of learning for its own sake.

Our daughter completed internships in London and worked freelance for several years before doing her MA. All this experience certainly helped her in her current role as a Lecturer at a northern university

### **What concerns you had/have and how you are overcoming/overcame it**

My daughter was only 18 when she went to University in London. It was a big thing for all of us for her to move away from home at that age. She coped very well but was very surprised to find most of those on her course had not come straight from school or sixth form college as she had. I was worried if she would be safe and how she would manage coming from Sheffield.

I was concerned about support for my daughter's health and well-being needs. I think support provision has improved considerably since she attended university. I felt happier when she was registered with a GP surgery. It is something to check out on open day visits what support is available and how to register with a GP/Nurse and other health provisions e.g. dentist, mental health support, sexual health etc. Does the university you are visiting have these services available or signposts them?

One of the great things for me and my husband was that our daughter did want to stay in touch with us by text/phone but at the same time this was dictated by her most of the time and not us. From taking her on the first September, we saw her again after about a month, which enabled her to get on with carving a niche for herself, but she knew she could get in touch with us at any time. At first, we did get phone calls saying she 'couldn't do this' and wanted to come home but she just needed someone there to talk things through. It was important for us to be there on the phone at any time to talk. This helped her a lot and us!

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I was concerned about her safety in London especially travelling around but she mainly did this with friends. The thing was when she lived at home and I knew she was out and about I'd worry, but if I didn't know, like when she was in London, it wasn't so immediate a worry. We spoke a lot about keeping safe long before she went to university. If you grow up being made aware appropriately of safety precautions, then I think that helps.

### **Did you go to open days? How did you find them?**

We as parents did attend Open Days with our daughter as chosen by her. She researched the Universities, as dictated by the course she was interested in, and we accompanied her. We travelled to 3; Nottingham, Derby, Glasgow and she went on her own with a friend to London. We were able to discuss openly our thoughts and impressions of these open days with our daughter. She made the final decision.

### **What research you did about going to university and was it helpful.**

As a secondary school teacher, I was at an advantage as I knew something about the Higher education process. I took some of my Year 9 students to visit the University of Sheffield via a scheme they ran at the time. I was fortunate that these visits also informed me, and I could discuss this with my daughter at the time as my students were a similar age to her.

I didn't really do much research prior to the Open day visits but I did prepare a list of questions we as parents wanted to ask on the visits.