

Unite

Foundation

Funding for Fun!

The Unite Foundation is lending its support to [All of Us](#); the community for estranged and care experienced HE students across the UK.

We have dedicated team members working with students and graduates to grow [the community online](#), we collaborate with students to produce national online and in-person events and – the reason you're probably here! – we have some '**Funding for Fun!**'. We have some money and support to offer to students who would like to organise their own #AllofUsLocal meetups – activities run by students, for other students in their local area.

If this is something you'd like to do, this is our guide to setting up a local meetup and applying for funding.

If you want to organise something bigger, or national, get in touch with Ira at Ira.Hakim@UniteFoudation.org.uk 😊

So, first things first...

WWWWW.

(what, who, where, when, why?)

What?

What is your #AllofUsLocal meetup going to be? Maybe you know exactly what you want to do, or maybe you can chat with other people who are part of the [community online](#) to see what people would like to do or go to? Use the newsfeed or polls to see what people are interested in!

Who?

Who is your #AllofUsLocal meetup for? Are they a walk away or a click away? Our funding covers both in-person and online meetups.

Who is going to organise it? Are you going solo or are you organising it with another person or group of people?

Where?

Where will it be? Will it be online? Will it be in person? If it's in person, do you have a venue or location near you in mind?

When?

When will it be? Consider when people have free time around their college and uni work and other commitments.

Why?

What do you want people to get out of it? It can be as simple as meeting new people and having a chat ☺

How?

How will you do it? What do you need to promote and run your #AllofUsLocal meetup?

How could we support you?

The following guidance explains what the Unite Foundation might be able to help you with – this ranges from tips and advice through to merchandise and funding.

The Unite Foundation could help you with things like meetup planning advice, putting you in touch with people who could help you, a small grant (money towards running your activity) or help promoting your #AllofUsLocal meetup.

We're not trying to duplicate what your student union/association/guild already offer though. So, if you are running something just for people at your Higher Education (HE) institution, speak to them or your SU first. But if they don't offer any support, please do apply for our support.

Depending on the size and nature of your meetup, if we help with funding, we can either pay for what you need upfront or you can purchase smaller things and then claim back costs with a receipt. You can have up to 25 students at a meetup, most meetups have around 8-20 students attend which we find is a good number to enable people to socialise and make new friends.

Who is your event for?

Local students

Is your meetup just for students in just your uni/HE institution or SU/Guild/Student Association)?

We can support you with anything on the 'What is Available?' list below.

But you do need to contact your student union/association/guild or HE institution first for funding. This is so we don't duplicate the funding they already offer.

Students in your town or city

Is your meetup for students in your town, city or across several HE Institutions?

We can support you with anything on the 'What is Available?' list below

Students in your region or across the UK

Is your event UK-wide, across a particular nation (Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England) or in a certain region (e.g., North Yorkshire, Greater London, Pembrokeshire)?

We can support you with anything on the 'What is Available?' list below and we can help to organise and run the event too.

Exactly what support is available?

This is not an exhaustive list, just some good examples of what we mean when we talk about event support. If you need some help that isn't listed here, let us know when you complete the 'Create Your Own Fun' form and we'll see what we can do for you!

Funding is awarded on a case-by-case basis. We can't promise we can fund everything (trips to Mars aren't quite in the budget yet) but it is always worth asking. We tend to say a budget of roughly anywhere between £8-£20 per person is reasonable.

Meetups are designed specifically to help care experienced and estranged students in a local area meet and make friends with other students from the same place. For instance, our grants could provide financial support to help a Cardiff University student run a meetup to connect with other students from the Cardiff-area.

Advice

- + A listening ear – someone to bounce your ideas off and provide tips or suggestions
- + Contacts – where we can, we'll link you up with anyone we know who can help
- + Meetup organising tips and help with planning

Grant funding – smaller scale

(Low-cost items you can purchase upfront and then claim back)

We can help you financially with a grant to run a small-scale meetup with funding anywhere between £0 to £100. 'Small scale' means that the costs involved in the meetup are things you can afford to buy upfront and then can claim back. The limit is £100 but you don't have to spend that much to qualify for help, you may just need a few bits and pieces and that's fine!

You will need to keep any receipts for these purchases and then email them to Ira so we can refund you. **You will need to let us know in advance what you intend to purchase via the application form, or we won't be able to refund you.**

If your meetup costs will be over £100 and/or you aren't able to purchase smaller scale resources under £100 upfront, see the larger scale funding information.

Small-scale cost examples include:

- + Resources for the meetup e.g., craft materials, stationery, board games, sports equipment, books, name labels and pens
- + Printing costs, e.g., for posters and flyers to advertise your #AllofUsLocal meetup
- + Light refreshments (think tea/coffee/milk/biscuits/cake)

Grant Funding – larger scale

If you are running a meetup in your town or city where you think costs will be over £100 and/or aren't able to purchase small scale resources under £100 upfront, the Unite Foundation can make purchases for you in advance. Some examples:

- + Having a speaker/workshop leader at the meetup (payment for their time and travel expenses)
- + Room/location or equipment hire
- + Tickets/entry fees for a group booking
- + Other costs, assessed on a case-by-case basis

Transport Costs – extras to the budget

Some cities are expensive to travel in and we know transport costs can be a challenge. If you think the students coming to your meetup would benefit from support with transport costs, we can add a question into the Eventbrite where people who attend on the day can request a refund up to £10 of their transport reimbursed. They will need to keep any receipts/screenshots as evidence of their spending on buses, local trains, bicycles, underground tube or metro, which can then be reimbursed by the Unite Foundation after the meetup. We will not cover car travel or long-distance trains for meetups, e.g. if someone wishes to go to a meetup in Birmingham but lives in Leicester.

Help promoting your meetup

We will:

- + Create an Eventbrite for the meetup, to enable students to sign up
- + Advertise your meetup on the All of Us community platform
- + Share information about upcoming meetups in the Unite Foundation newsletter
- + Post to All of Us and This is Us social media to advertise upcoming meetups
- + Help you get in touch with your HE institution/university, student union and other local universities, charities and partners to let them know the meetup is going on and get them to help advertise it.
- + Provide #AllOfUsLocal meetup packs for everyone coming along and other helpful things to signpost people to where you are on the day, like flags and posters

We won't cover

- + Trips abroad
- + Alcohol or drugs purchase
- + Non-care experienced and estranged students. All attendees must be estranged and/or care experienced people.
- + Activities exclusive to an existing group of friends. (You can run a meetup and invite care experienced and estranged students who are friends, but the meetup must be open to those you're not already friends with too.)
- + Students not from a local area wishing to attend that area's meetup. e.g. A student living in and from Aberdeen should not be attending a Glasgow meetup, instead we will encourage them to run their own for students in Aberdeen.
- + Transport reimbursing over £10.

The rules for all #AllOfUsLocal meetups!

1. Meetups may be in-person or virtual, but they must open to both care experienced and estranged students.
2. If you are running a meetup supported by us, share it with [the community online](#), letting people know when and where and how they can attend if they want to.
3. Our travel fund is only open to students who study in the area where you are holding the meetup. For instance, if you are running a meetup in London, a student who studies and lives in Cambridge would not be eligible to claim travel costs.

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Now what?

If you have decided you would like to apply for some support, you can fill out the [Create Your Own Fun form](#). Ira is on hand if you want to talk through any ideas or what you think you might need before you complete the application. You can email ira.hakim@unitefoundation.org.uk or join the [community online](#) and send a Ira DM!

It's important to complete this form 3–4 weeks before you intend to hold your meetup, so the Unite Foundation has time to look at what you need, help you with any promotion to get the word out to students, and to make any necessary bookings or payments.

Have an idea for something bigger?

Drop an email to Ira.Hakim@UniteFoundation.org.uk if you have an idea for a larger-scale (e.g. regional/national) event. For example, if you'd like there to be a day activity for all students in Northern Ireland, a huge get-together in Yorkshire or an online event for Mother's Day etc.

Appendix 1

Meetups examples and suggestions for what you might include in your application form.

Remember you can run #AllofUsLocal meetups online/virtual or in-person!

Example 1: Coffee and Catch-Up

You want to organise a meetup for care experienced and estranged students at your university in London. The plan is for approximately 8-12 people to gather for tea/coffee and biscuits/cake on a Wednesday from 4pm+ in a room in your Students' Union.

In your 'Create Your Own fun' form you ask the Unite Foundation to help advertise your meetup by putting it on the All of Us and This Is Us social media, and helping you get in touch with people at your university and SU to raise awareness. You also ask for a half hour chat with Ira just to chat through your plan for the meetup because you've not done something like this before and want some advice on running it.

You then reach out to other people in the London Community to ask if they are at the same uni as you and want to help run the meetup. You also contact your student union to ask them to help you set up the group and ask them to provide funding for the tea/coffee and biscuits/cake for the meetup. If they can't provide any, you reach out to Ira at the Unite Foundation who is able to cover the cost for you.

Example 2: Casual Meet-Up in Manchester

You live in Manchester and want to run a meetup for all care experienced and estranged students in the city to meet up at Bundobust for some street-food and then go for a casual walk along by the canal area after. In your form, you say you are going to print out lots of posters to stick up to advertise the meetup so need to claim back printing expenses with a receipt afterwards, which will be about £5.

Example 3: Five-a-side Footie

You live in Cardiff and want to run some laid-back games for local care experienced and estranged students on a Saturday in September. You need a hand with affording to rent a local football pitch for the day and want to provide some light refreshments for players. You'd like the Unite Foundation to pay for the pitch hire for you (£100) but will buy the soft drinks and snacks yourself and then claim them back after (around £40). You ask for these things in your form and state it will cost around £140 total.

Example 4: Cross-Stitch and Creativity Online

A group of you in Aberdeen want to run an online craft evening with other students in your city. The plan is to hold an informal Zoom session where you play chilled-out music, chat and create some small cross stitch pieces. You ask the Unite Foundation for advice on how to run the meetup, help with advertising it and for funding to purchase/put together the cross-stitch packs to send out in the post to attendees. Numbers: you allow up to 15 people to sign up to the meetup and provide their emails and addresses (for the packs). You might ask UF to purchase the packs upfront for those who have signed up and either get these sent to your address to pass on to attendees or ask UF to send them out to attendees directly.

Example 5: North-East Graduating Group


















You want to set up a local group for yourself and other final year students who are nervous about graduating and invite recent graduates along from various universities in the North-East. You want a space where you can meet for an hour or two to vent, ask questions and to share hints and tips. In your form you ask the Unite Foundation to help advertise the group, to share it in their newsletter and to provide some funding to send some helpful resources in the post to people within the group.

Appendix 2

Top tips

- ✓ Be sensible and don't give out your personal address
- ✓ Run any #AllofUsLocal meetups in a public place
- ✓ Use the All of Us social network to share your ideas and get people interested, and then share the meetup's Eventbrite link in the network once it's ready to go
- ✓ Tap into relevant groups locally that might support you, such as other local student union societies or nearby charities.
- ✓ Not all meetups will need financial support from the Unite Foundation, but please share anything you organise with Ira so we can help you get the word out there e.g. if you are running something at your own uni, we can spread the news.

Some real-life examples of #AllofUsLocal meetups students have run:

-  Turkish Lunch at Megan's Restaurant in London
-  Sugar & Dice games night and dinner in Liverpool
-  Coffee & Cake on Castle Street in Edinburgh
-  Punting & Picnic by Magdalen College in Oxford
-  Clothing Swap and meetup in Leicester
-  20" Pizzas and Games at the Lost Wanderer in Newcastle
-  Crazy Crafts for students based anywhere, online
-  New Year, Good Food! At Bloc+ in Glasgow
-  Treetop Crazy Golf and refreshments in Birmingham
-  Bundobust meal in Manchester Piccadilly
-  Study Buddies study session, online
-  Christmas Cheer at Drapery Place in London
-  Lane 7 Bowling and Pool in Leicester
-  Builder's Brew Café tea, cake and Lego-fun in Sheffield
-  Christmas Eve meal and games for North-East students at Hustle N1
-  Pancake Day celebrations in St Andrews
-  National Student Pride & Costa Coffee pre-meet in London

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Plus, a couple blogs to help talk you through the process

- Lisa's blog [How to create your own meetup with the This is Us Community](#)
- Kez's blog [Running my First Ever Meetup: Behind the Scenes](#)

What is an event?

Events are where you have an idea for something much bigger so the activity is run with or by the Unite Foundation, but it can still be a student idea. For example, we have previously had events such as a Mother's Day Talking Circle and a big online Graduation Celebration in July 2024. Think something that is regional or even national, and it can be online or in-person.

Have an idea for something bigger? Drop an email to Ira.Hakim@UniteFoundation.org.uk