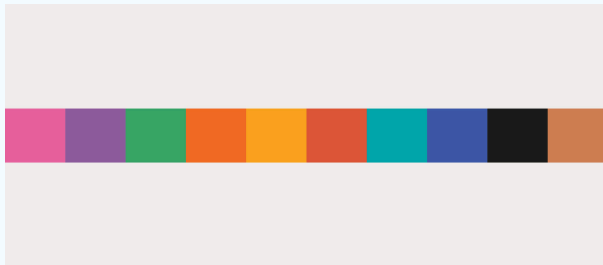


# A chat with the We Care Team...

For part of our Care Experienced History month online roadshow 2025, we will be interviewing a series of external organisations to find out what they do and what support is available. Up first we have, Ira Hakim who is the programme Manager for [All of Us](#).



**“Everyone is welcome and you’re free to be your most authentic self.”**

**Q** -Introduce yourself & tell us a little bit about your role within the company.

**A**-Hello, I'm Ira Hakim! I am working with care experienced and estranged students across the UK to lead the development of our community strategy, which means helping to facilitate the growth of an inclusive community for all care experienced and estranged people in higher education. If you'd like to talk about anything student-community centred, I would genuinely love to hear from you. Outside of work, I love being in the great outdoors, folk music, wild swimming, raqs sharqi, reading and big dogs (the fluffier, the better – Border Collies and Samoyeds are ideal).



**Q** -Tell us about how the programme started and how it all works

**A**-The Unite Foundation is the only UK charity that works with both estranged and care experienced students. During the Covid-19 pandemic students across the UK from told the Unite Foundation charity that they wished they knew more people with similar experiences, but didn't know how to connect with them. Covid both highlighted and exacerbated this issue. Out of this came the launch of All of Us in early 2022.

All of Us provides a safe place for these students to connect with each other. We use the wider definitions in our community: it is a space for anyone who self-identifies as estranged and/or care experienced. You can be any age and studying at any level of higher education degree.

*Our student-designed All of us t-shirt (affirmations for care experienced & estranged students)*

The term **care-experienced** refers to students who have been in care or are from a looked-after background at any stage in their life (no matter how short): this includes those who have been in kinship care arrangements and adopted children who were previously looked-after.

**Q** -How has the organisation changed since it all started in 2022 & how many students have joined?

**A**-All of Us is now a big community! We have members all the way from UG first year to PhDs! We have over 1000 members in our online community, and our meetups and events support several hundred students to connect with each other both online and in-person each year. Our monthly newsletter, made for and edited by care experienced and estranged students themselves, has a readership of over 700 students.

**Q** -Tell us about the Vibe of this community.

**A**-This is a space to find friends who get it and allies to organise with. Everyone is welcome and you're free to be your most authentic self. We don't believe in judgement and kindness is a strength. Everyone is an equal member of the community. We're united by our flag; co-designed by estranged and care experienced students, the colours represent our diverse and dynamic community and are flanked by the symbol of equality. Most importantly: we're here for each other, to keep each other afloat in what can sometimes feel like testing times.



Images of recent Craft events ran by All of Us members



Graduation Celebration Postal Pack (what went out to all of the students who were graduating and signed up to join our online party)

**“We have over 1000 members in our online community.”**

**Q** -What support (in person or online) do you offer? Any fun events we should be aware of ?

**A**-We offer online themed events, a Passionate Students Group, a monthly All of Us newsletter (by and for students) and a closed online community platform on Mighty Networks, where people can connect. We also run several online events throughout the year, our next one is 'All of Us - Healthy Habits for Happiness Workshop' on Friday 2nd May, 11am-12 noon. This is an exclusive event to help care experienced and estranged students with wellbeing around exam season and general happiness.

We have a small grants fund where students can apply for funding to cover running their own meetup at their university or in their city. Get in touch if you have an idea of something you'd like to see happen, and we'll see if we can help bring it to life. We've had all sorts! In recent times we've enjoyed:

- National Student Pride gathering
- Coffee & Cake meetups
- Pottery Painting
- Hallowe'en & Crafts Party
- Christmas Market trail/bingo
- Lego Café Brew & Build
- Ten Pin Bowling
- Pizza & Games Nights
- Beats & Books
- Crochet for Beginners

This is just the student-led gatherings! We've had many others Unite Foundation run-events too, which always come from student ideas.