

Impact Report

2025

Unite

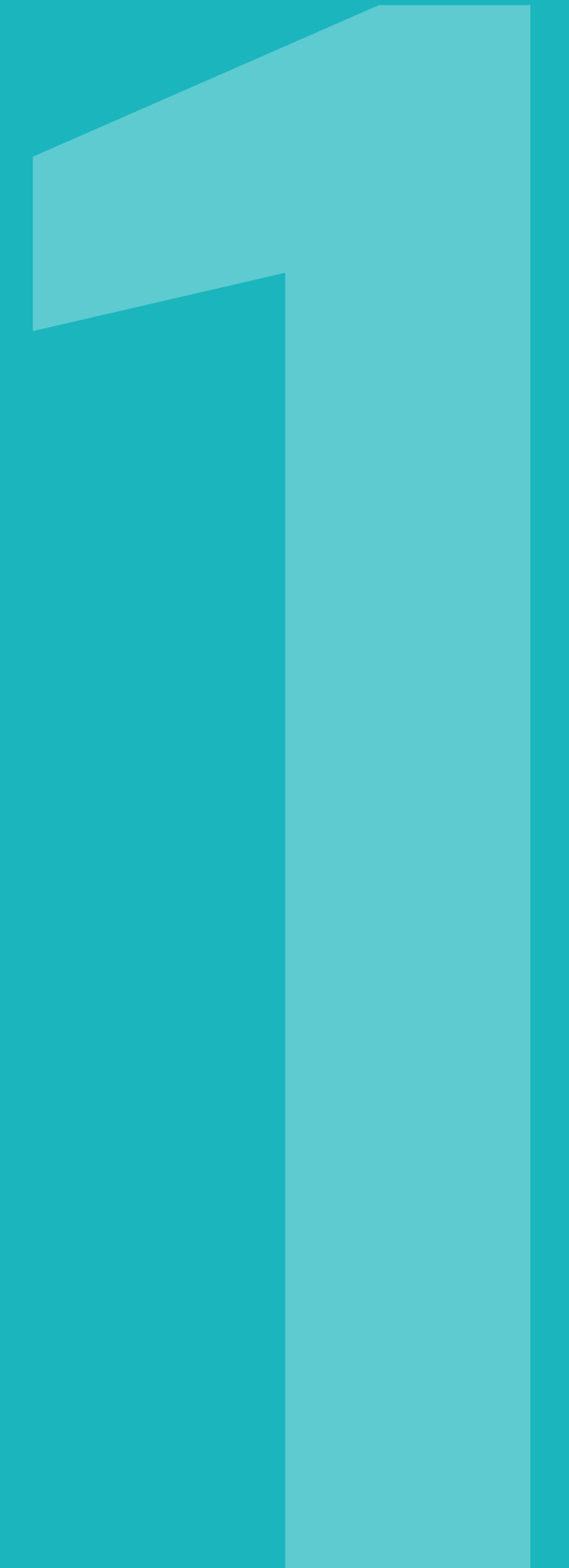
Foundation

thisisusatuni.org/unite-foundation

Welcome to our impact report looking back at our 2023/24 year and forward through 2025 and beyond. We've delivered our core scholarship offer for care experienced and estranged students – creating more awards with new institutions and funding partners; we've expanded our student reach through the All of Us Community; and we've made advances through advocacy and campaigning to lower the barriers faced by care experienced and estranged students in Higher Education.

[Read more on the difference made in our areas of activity](#) 

A home at university



1 A home at university

Our annual scholarship scheme provides a year-round, free, home at university for up to 3 years. Scholarship students are estranged from their family or have had experience of the UK children's social care system. For young people from this background, Higher Education is life changing, but far too few reach university, and far too many end up leaving before they've got their degree.

Independent research from Jisc shows that our scholarship makes a difference; the students that we support progress, and achieve good degrees, close to students from more typical backgrounds, and at significantly better rates than their peers. We're doing our bit to close the gap and want all care experienced and estranged young people to get the same opportunity.

191

students were on the scholarship during the 23/24 academic year with **38** graduating in Summer 2024.

96

new students joined the scholarship in August 2024 and we're grateful to UniKitOut, Harford Trust, and many small individual donors, for funding our welcome packs that turn an empty student room into a personal and cosy home.

813

scholarships have been awarded since we were founded in 2012.

We're currently piloting 3 year co-funded scholarships with:

- Canterbury Christ Church University
- Imperial College London
- Northumbria University
- Oxford Brookes University
- University of East Anglia
- University of London
- University of Nottingham
- University of Winchester
- University of York

These pilots are made possible thanks to funding support from the Blagrave Trust, Crucible Foundation, Dulverton Trust, Portal Trust, and another Trust wishing to retain privacy, that has enabled us to expand our reach.

Thank you to these institutions for investing in the success of their care experienced and estranged students.

They join our long-standing network of universities where we fully fund scholarships.



This sits alongside our long-term support from **Unite Students**, our founder and principal corporate donor, whose generous annual donation makes all our scholarships possible and underpins our wider activities.



Community



Care experienced and estranged young people are a minority in the wider UK student population and can often feel isolated or that they don't belong. We're helping them get connected to one another – socially as well as for common purpose – to feel united by a sense of community.

The All of Us Community is facilitated by the Unite Foundation but **is run by and for** students to provide online events and in-person meetups, plus resources for any relevant student in the UK.

There are over
1,000
student members in
the online All of Us
Community space.

The All of Us small grants scheme enabled **11** activities with **143** participants in 23/24 – another **5** have taken place since then, including one gathering on Christmas Day. **16** students have taken on leadership roles to run activities or act as 'Community Catalysts' to keep the student space responsive and relevant.

4,500

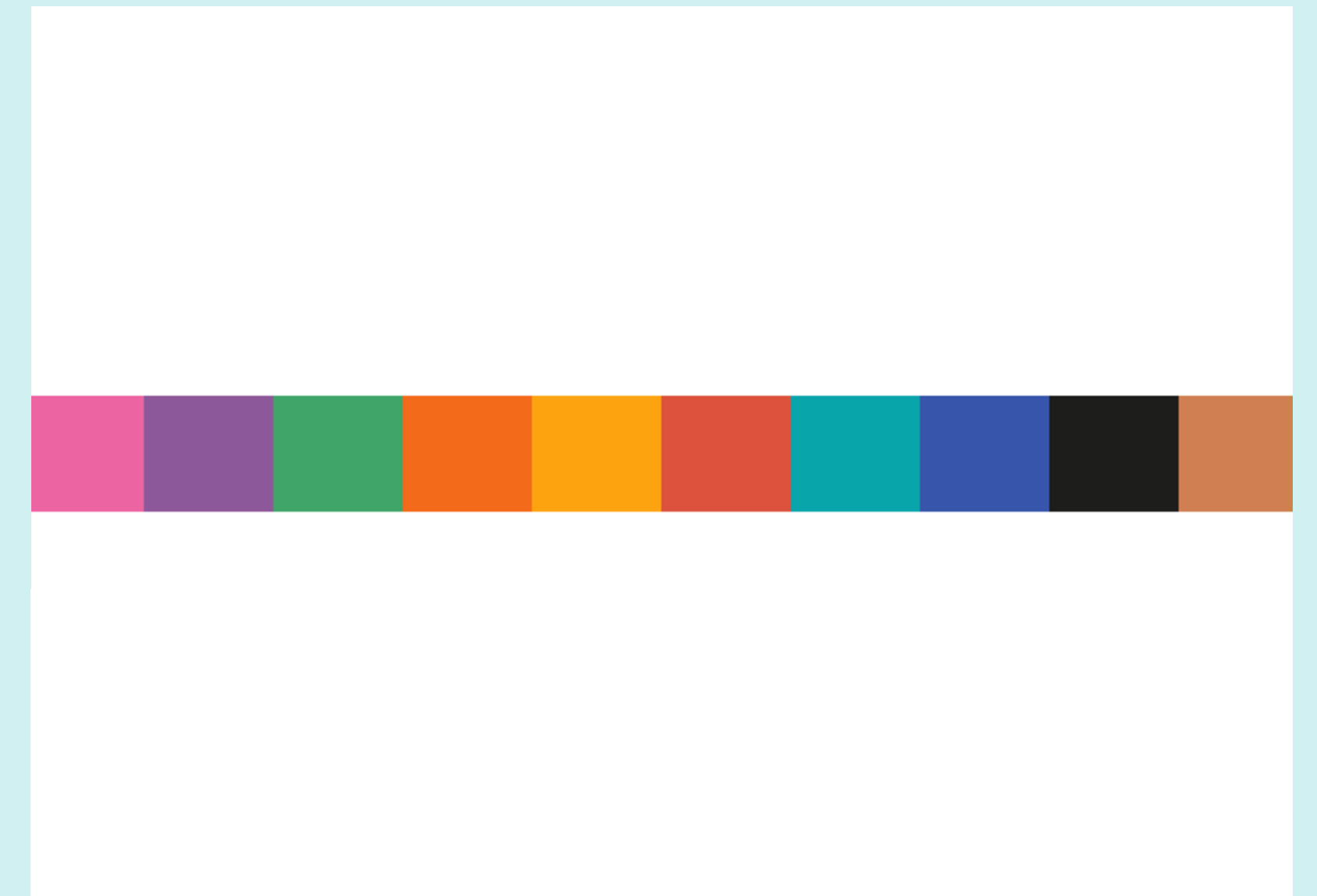
All of Us postcards have been shared with universities and charities to raise awareness that the Community offers a welcoming haven.

We've created an HE Peer Network so that university professionals can support one another, and All of Us, to prosper locally, regionally and nationally.

All of Us students have helped shape national policy by feeding into the last Government's Review of Children's Social Care; they also held a focus group to input into the (December '24) [Social Market Foundation report on Care and Learning in Higher Education](#). We're creating space for students that are passionate for change and are committed to ensuring their lived experiences reach decision makers.



You can read the Social Market Foundation report on Care and Learning in Higher Education here.



The **All of Us flag** was co-created by estranged and care experienced students and represents the diversity of community, flanked by the symbol of equality. Recognition of the flag is growing and we're ambitious that in future it will 'mark the spot' for Community activity in every university in the UK.

Removing roadblocks



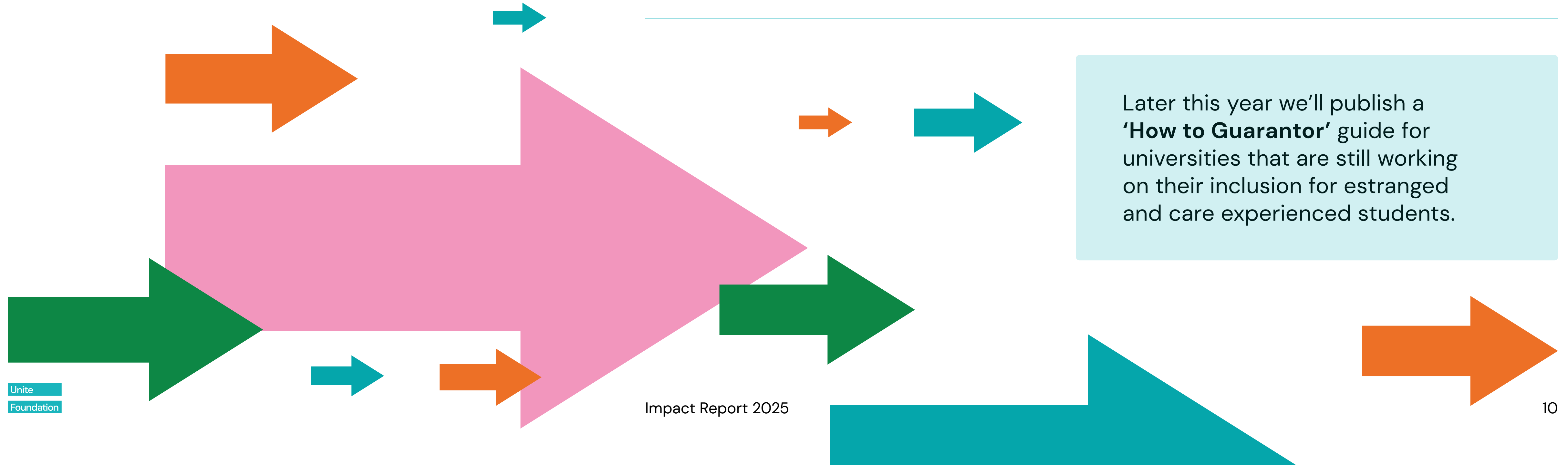
We've been active on the issue of rent guarantors for some time. Students from a care or estranged background rarely have someone to turn to that can sign up for that role, and the need to have a rent guarantor typically crops up late in a tenancy process catching students unawares.

Through our 'How to Guarantor' programme we're challenging and supporting universities to:

Have clear student-facing information on rent guarantors. Our 23/24 audit of universities showed an **8% increase** of websites with suitable content – a great start but with more progress to make. We'll be auditing again in summer '25 to mark the next advance from the current baseline of 45%.

Provide a cost-free solution to the rent guarantor issue. This could be an in-house scheme, partnering with a commercial provider, or championing tenancies without guarantors. In 2025 our **webinar series** is offering universities information and practical help to make this a reality.

Later this year we'll publish a **'How to Guarantor'** guide for universities that are still working on their inclusion for estranged and care experienced students.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging



Our scholarship cohort and All of Us Community members have:

Great numbers of mixed and minority ethnicities

Wonderful mix of neurodiversity and different physical abilities

Fantastic amounts of LGBTQ+ identity

Amazing range of faith beliefs

Brilliant breadth of gender

Young people with experience of care, or estranged from family, have a routinely high diversity of characteristics that are otherwise chronically under-represented in the mainstream student population.

We're proud that our work drives equitable outcomes across other markers of educational disadvantage separate and in addition to care or estranged status.

We're conscious that inclusion requires constant attention.

Care experienced and estranged students belong in Higher Education where their presence creates a richer university experience for all.

To donate and help us achieve our goals [click here](#) or contact fiona.ellison@unitefoundation.org.uk to start a fruitful conversation.

The Unite Foundation is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales 1198601 and a charity registered in Scotland SC051987.

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