

One of the biggest areas of feedback from university students surrounded being prepared for independent life. Whilst many young people dream of leaving home and having that independence, the reality can be overwhelming. Below is a checklist of areas students highlighted as ideas that will help when they leave home.

Some of these you may have already ticked off, but you can still use it as a reminder. This may seem a lot of information, but you can break it down into bitesize chunks.

Some aspects can be started at an early age; having them help around the house, cooking dinner with you, going shopping with you etc. Preparing your child to become independent can help them feel better equipped for later life. If they understand the value of money, how to budget and save to avoid debt they are less likely to turn to harmful behaviours and actions as a way of coping. Take action at their pace and make these tasks appear interesting rather than a chore!

Every student involved in this project has said this can help future students prepare for university life so whilst it may appear daunting the long term success speaks for itself.



## Cook

Can your child cook some basic meals? Do they know how long to cook pasta or rice? Can they boil an egg or make an omelette? Get your child involved in cooking the family meals – they do not need to be the next Jamie Oliver but knowing the basics and being able to cook at least 5 meals confidently can set them up.

Support cooking from scratch to encourage healthy meals and helping them to ensure they have a balanced diet. There are many different cookbooks to give to your child with simple recipes and ideas, they may end up eating lots of beans on toast and pot noodles but at least you have tried!



## Basic food hygiene

They do not need to be moving into a catering career to have some information on basic food hygiene, if nothing else it will help prevent food poisoning!

Does your child know the difference between Use By and Best Before?

Are they aware of cross contamination?

Are they aware of safe temperature zones for different areas? (fridge temperature should be between 2 and 7C, freezer between -18 –and -22C Hot food should be eaten within 2 hours and cold food within 4 hours)

Do they know that ovens need to be heated up before putting anything in to cook so that it cooks properly and safely?

Do they understand what can and can't go in the microwave – metal will blow up your microwave and if plastic isn't microwave friendly it will melt.



## Shopping

If you were to give your child £50 and sent them to the nearest supermarket to get your weekly shop, how would they fare?

Encourage your child to help with family shopping which will help them to learn the cost of food and essentials early on. Thanks to the hand held scanners they can enjoy scanning your basket and seeing how much things cost. Then they can look at how much food they can get with a certain amount of money.

It's not just food, chat to your child regarding the essentials they need to think about such as cleaning/washing/hygiene/laundry/beauty products which also cost money and need to be factored into a monthly budget.



## Laundry

Can your child use the washing machine? Do they understand the different labels in their clothes? Teach them what these labels mean and how to work the washing machine/tumble dryer.

Look at how to separate light and darks clothes, how often to wash bedding etc, what powder/softener/stain remover to use and when. Remember your child may have to use a laundrette at university so you can take them to one and show them how they work so they feel prepared.



## General cleanliness/Housework

Many young people think the cleaning fairy comes into their rooms and houses and make it happen but so they do not get a shock when they have their move out, help them by getting them involved in the household chores.

Do they know how to use a Hoover, dishwasher, mashing machine, lawnmower? Are they aware of the different cleaning products?

Get your child involved in chores such as cleaning the bathroom, stacking the dishwasher or doing the washing up, sweeping and mopping the floors, polishing, dusting, hoovering, stripping and making beds, hanging out washing etc. Do they know how to separate recycling or how often the bins need to go out and which bin on which day? If they do it regularly and it becomes part of their routine, they will be better equipped when leave home.



## Healthcare

We teach children about our emergency services at a young age and what to do in case of an emergency but ensure they know when to see a doctor/pharmacist/ring 111/go to hospital? Does your child know basic first aid?

Do they know how to contact their doctor, order a prescription, seek medical advice or medicines?

Providing them with information, particularly if they are moving to a new area can help them to feel assured and able to cope in their new environments.



## Car

If your child owns a car do they know how to;

- Change a tyre?
- Put air in the tyres and what pressure their tyres should be at?
- How to top up water, oil, windscreen washer?
- When their MOT is due or when to have a service?
- What documents they need to have, how to renew car insurance, tax, breakdown cover?



## Money

There is so much to think about regarding money. Following on from Student feedback this is one of their biggest issues and an indicator for gambling as they try and win money to cover debts.

We have looked at shopping to think about the cost of food and other essentials, but we can also help our children further by helping them to understand the following;

**Bank accounts** – Do they have a bank account? Do they know how to get an account and what type of account is best for everyday or saving? Do they understand online banking? Get your child to research different banks, what they offer, and which is the best for them. It can always start simple and switch to another account when they leave home or go into full time work etc.

**Budgeting** – Do they know how to budget? Have they calculated how much they need to pay the monthly bills and other costs and still have money left for things they want?

**Bills** – Go through what types of bills they have. How much they are per month, when they need to be paid and how to pay these (Is it through direct debit/in person/over the phone/taken out of their grants or wages?) You could show them the family bills to help them to understand. Once they start working they may have their own bills such as phone bill, driving lessons, gym memberships etc

When they become independent explain about utilities such as electric, water, gas, council tax, life insurance etc

**Setting up direct debits** – Do they know what a direct debit or standing order are and can they set one up? Your child may need you to explain them.

**Saving** – As soon as your child starts a job, even a weekend job get them to open a savings account to put some money aside. Whilst young encourage them to save up for something so they understand the value of saving.

**Credit cards/overdrafts/loans** – One of the biggest issues for students starting university is the amount of money on offer to them (student loans and grants, being able to apply for an overdraft and credit card) without any of the implications and long term issues explained to them. Help your child by explaining what each aspect is, how to apply and the consequences of not paying these back.



## Finding work

- Do they know when they get a job, what the minimum wage and national wage is?
- Do they understand their payslip and do they know what a P60 and P45 is?
- Do they know what National Insurance and Income Tax are and what they cover? Do they understand the contents of a contract of employment and a zero hours contract?
- Are they aware they need to set up a pension at an early age, why this is good practice and what they need to pay and what their employer pays?



## Living Independently

- Do they know and understand a tenancy agreement?
- Do they know what utility bills they need to cover such as gas/electric/water/council tax/TV licence/broadband?
- Do they understand the basic steps for buying a house and applying for a mortgage?

Preparing your child to become independent can help them feel better equipped in life. If they understand the value of money and how to budget this will help them when they leave home. Make some of these chores appear interesting rather than a chore. Your child will probably enjoy some aspects of these tasks!

