

# **Turning legislation into practice together**

## **First Report on Corporate Parenting Activity in Scotland**

**April 2015 – March 2018**

**June 2018**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

**Minister for Children and Young People**

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# Corporate Parenting Activity in Scotland April 2015 – March 2018

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## Ministerial Foreword

As Minister for Children and Young People, I am so proud to be a Corporate Parent, a role I take very seriously. One of my duties is to present the first corporate parenting Report to the Scottish Parliament; detailing how we have fulfilled our collective duties under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

I am privileged to have inherited this landmark policy as part of my portfolio and I know that this Act is one of the most collaborative pieces of legislation to come before our Parliament. I am also committed to driving improvements for those who experience care, now and in years to come, by ensuring all new policies and future legislation benefit from the lived experiences of Scotland's young people.

In the three years since commencement of Part 9, the 124 individuals and organisations listed as Corporate Parents have worked hard to understand how to meaningfully understand their duties in their own contexts and how best to adopt them into every day practice and culture. This ambitious undertaking was designed to be a work in progress but already we have risen to the challenges of collaboration, co-design and co-production breaking new ground across Government and the wider public sector in Scotland towards continuous improvement in support of our care experienced children and young people. One of the most powerful illustrations is where Corporate Parenting Boards have been established to bring young people and adults together to explore, discuss and plan how services are shaped and delivered. Already experience shows that this approach is a meaningful and straightforward way to uphold rights and improve outcomes.

This Act gives us all a great opportunity to meet our collective primary objective; that is, to ensure our children and young people do not face additional barriers because of care experience.

Since taking up this post, I have seen and heard directly how dedicated Corporate Parents are ensuring that children and young people are supported and encouraged and that their rights are fully understood. We are required by law to evidence this commitment and to consider together how to address the challenge of embedding real culture change across all aspects of the public sector. The best measure of real culture change is, of course, feedback from children and young people with lived experience of the care system being taken on board and used to improve how services are designed and delivered to have the best impact.

Children and young people have told me they 'want to know who their Corporate Parents are' and that they want 'to be treated as equals'. Hundreds of care experienced young people have found a voice through their participation in Champions Boards and know they have influenced decision making in areas of real importance to them.

For me personally, corporate parenting is quite simply about doing what any good parent should do for a child. It is about being there for our children, listening to them, understanding what they need, helping them to develop life skills and reach their own personal goals. As with parenting, this sometimes requires negotiation to share the care and pull on each other's strengths; but always to work together encouraging and supporting children as much as possible to grow and develop into happy, healthy and active citizens.

This first Report from Scottish Ministers sets out an overview of planning approaches, collaborative working and improving practice; it also acknowledges the inevitable challenges and creative approaches taken towards implementing such an ambitious policy.

I want to thank all the children and young people who offered personal reflections on the impact of corporate parenting over the last three years. In addition, the updates provided to me gave essential insight to each organisation's unique experience of their roles and responsibilities. No Report can of course reflect all the detail but rather, I intend to illustrate the breadth of activity across Scotland and offer honest accounts from those with experience of care and Corporate Parents of some key challenges and improvements identified along the way.

Together, we can make Scotland the best place to grow up.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maree Todd', written in a cursive style.

**MAREE TODD**

## 1) What is this Report on Corporate Parenting?

“Scotland wants to be a country that provides all children, no matter their circumstances, the best opportunities to grow, develop, and experience the same opportunities so that no individual child is disadvantaged or limited by disadvantage, neglect or poverty.”

**Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People, 2012**

“We are working hard to ensure that as a nation, we all understand the impact of ACEs and do what we can to mitigate these so that all children can be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.”

**Maree Todd, Minister for Childcare and Early Years, 2018**

This Report is based on information drawn from approximately 124 corporate parenting plans prepared by the 24 individuals and organisations named in Schedule 4 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014<sup>1</sup> (the 2014 Act). It offers an account of how corporate parenting has been embraced by the many different representative public sector individuals and organisations throughout Scotland and sets out to illustrate some of the different approaches to reflect the different statutory roles and unique circumstances of such a diverse group of organisations.

“We want our corporate parents to make changes for us when we need them” **Care experienced young people ‘asks’ of Angus Council and NHS Tayside**

Crucially, it reflects on Scotland’s looked after children and young people and care leavers and how they have benefitted from this corporate parenting support. This Report does not summarise all the Plans or updates but a wealth of specific information can be found in individual published Plans which by requirement should be available on each Corporate Parent’s website.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/pdfs/asp\\_20140008\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/pdfs/asp_20140008_en.pdf)

Corporate parenting is about listening to the needs, fears and wishes of children and young people, and being proactive and determined in our collective efforts to meet them. In other words, it is a role which should complement and support the actions of parents, families and carers, working with these key adults to deliver positive change for children and young people who need us to provide support.

Although all corporate parenting responsibilities and duties must be met, preparing this Report continues to highlight the particular importance of listening to care experienced children and young people, how this impacts on our ability to meet the crucial responsibility to assess their needs and where their voices have informed changes in practice and services. This Report emphasises the already established benefits of collaboration and demonstrates where adopting a collaborative approach has brought about a greater shared awareness of the inequalities care experienced children and young people face.

We know that many looked after children and care leavers experience some of the poorest personal outcomes of any group of children and young people in Scotland; current published statistics set out the facts. National Social Work statistics on looked after children<sup>2</sup>, other published data on their educational outcomes<sup>3</sup> and on-going work to address the issues such as mental health and homelessness in Scotland provide stark reading.

However, building and using such an evidence base is a key component to future policy development and without a doubt these data also include some encouraging improvements over recent years. On 31 July 2017 there were 14,897 looked after children in Scotland. This is the fifth consecutive year the numbers have decreased but represents some 2 percent of our population of children.

Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of children and young people in each care setting. Foster care and kinship care are the most common care settings, accounting for 35 percent and 28 percent respectively, as there is a continued decreasing trend in children being looked after at home and numbers of children looked after in residential care settings have been static at around 10 percent over recent years.

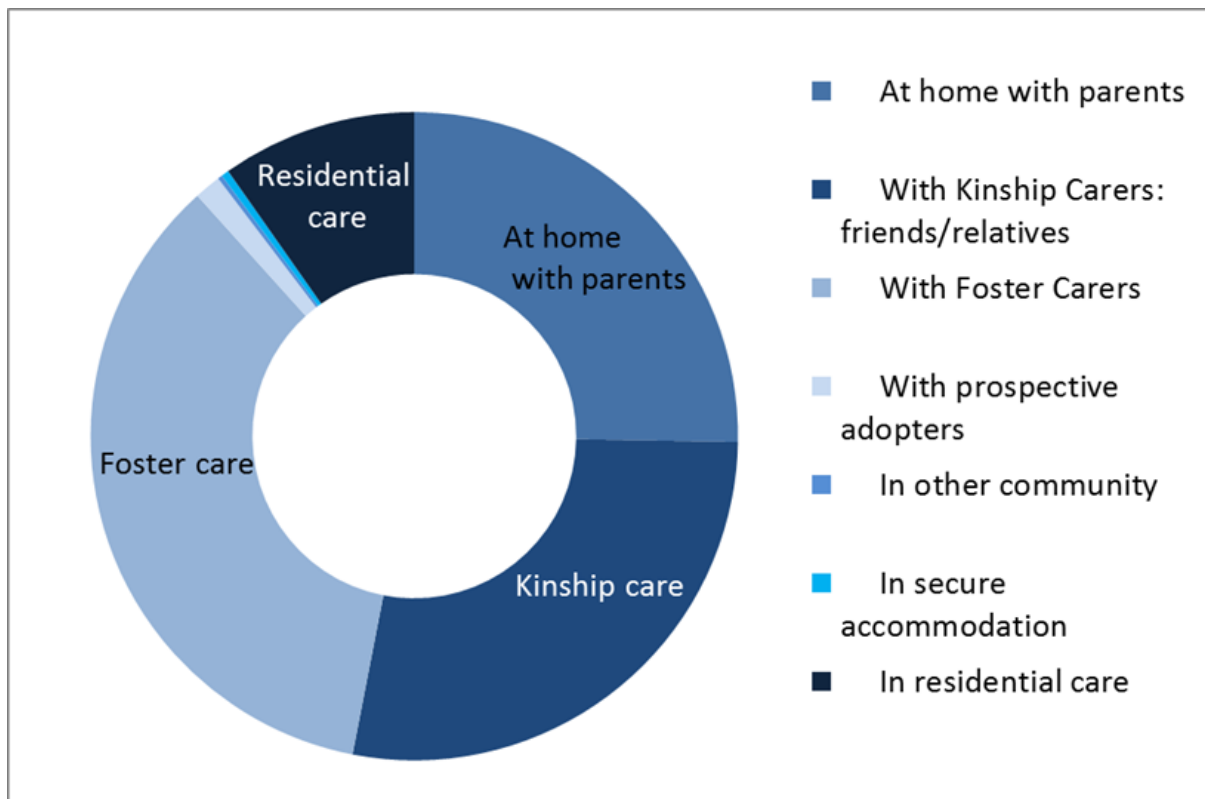
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<sup>2</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/childrens-social-work-statistics-2016-17/>

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.scot/stats/bulletins/01310](http://www.gov.scot/stats/bulletins/01310)



Figure 1, proportion of children and young people in each care setting, from National Social Work statistics on looked after children 2016-17



Since 2009, there has been a noticeable improvement in the proportion of school leavers with experience of care who have achieved one or more qualification at SCQF level 5 or better. This has more than doubled from 15% to 44% on 2016-17; but our young people with experience of care clearly describe the many day-to-day challenges that continue to hinder their progress towards reaching their full potential. This reminds us why we must work together as Corporate Parents to do more.

The 2014 Act provides an improved framework of support for looked after children and care leavers and Section 4 of this Report offers more detail on the wider context. The corporate parenting duties are part of a philosophy of care heavily reliant on building stable, supportive relationships. In this way, we encourage a much greater sense of belonging, help children and young people overcome adverse life experiences and encourage graduated transitions at a pace appropriate to individual needs. Some significant progress has been made by highlighting and addressing homelessness at the point of young people leaving care, but we must ensure absolutely nobody leaves care into homelessness and that fewer care experienced young people become homeless in the years to come.

The Scottish Government welcomed the recent Report on Homelessness<sup>4</sup> from the Local Government and Communities Committee and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group<sup>5</sup> (HARSAG) recommendations. Acting on these findings, and in parallel with Scotland's Independent Care Review<sup>6</sup> will help secure better outcomes and improve the quality of care for our young people based on what they have said works well and what does not.

“if you were to ask me to sum up what I consider to be my mission as First Minister, it would be this – the mission of making real progress towards genuine equality of opportunity. If we fail in that mission, not only will we be letting down our young people, but we will all be diminished. For every young person who cannot fulfil their potential, all of us lose out on the talent, ideas and initiative of someone who could be contributing so much to our society.” **First Minister, 15<sup>th</sup> Kilbrandon Lecture 2017**

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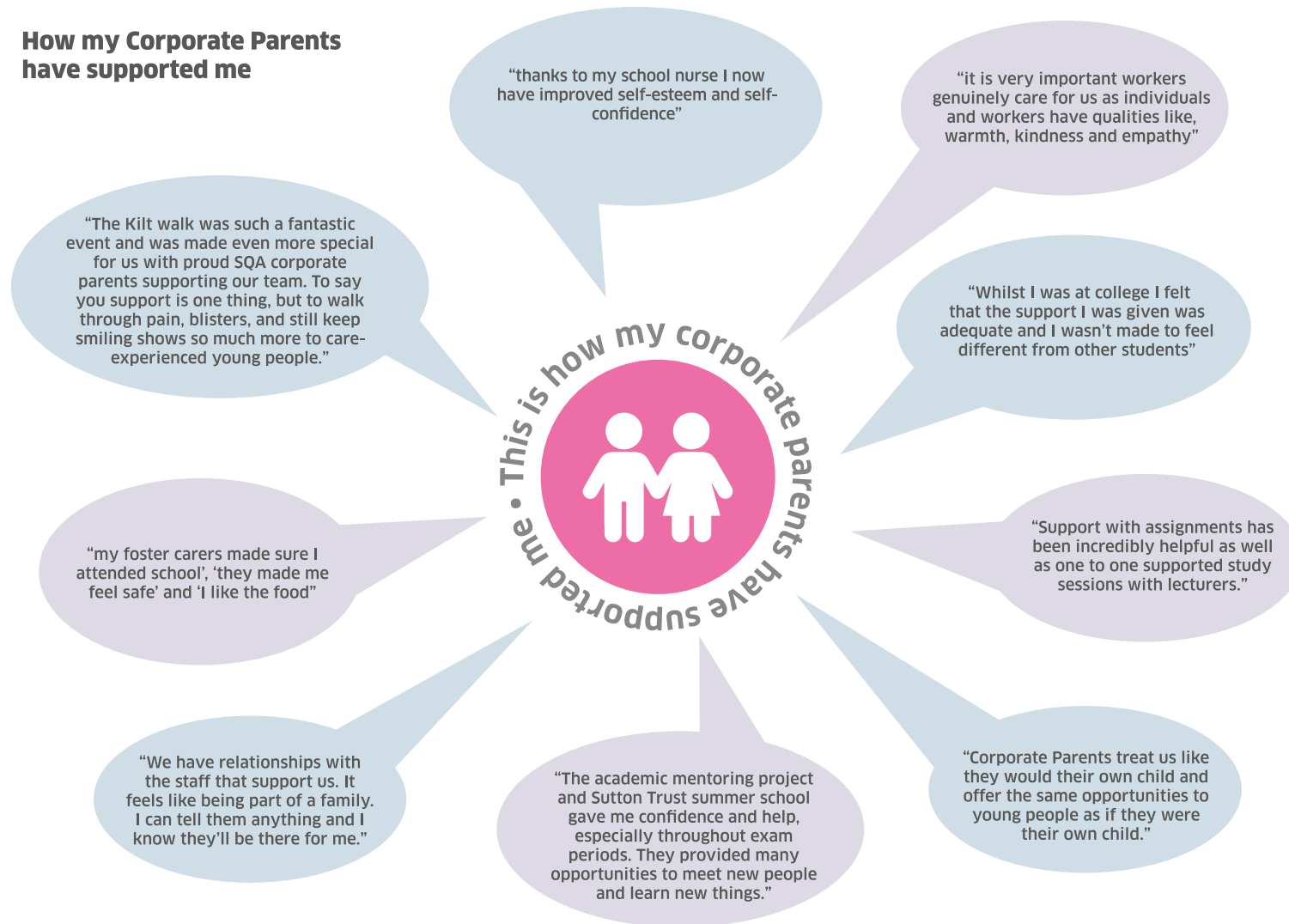
<sup>4</sup> <https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/LGC/2018/2/12/Report-on-Homelessness/LGCS52018R6.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-rough-sleeping-recommendations/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.carereview.scot/>

## 2) What does Corporate Parenting mean to Children and Young People?

### How my Corporate Parents have supported me



“We have relationships with the staff that support us. It feels like being part of a family. I can tell them anything and I know they’ll be there for me.” **14-year-old on East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Youth Intensive Support Service**

“My foster carers made sure I attended school” “They made me feel safe” “I like the food” **Care experienced children in Falkirk**

“Schools should teach life skills, as well as how to count”  
“Siblings should not be separated from each other in care, ruins relationships” **Care experienced students in Ayrshire**

The importance of meaningful dialogue, that is, really listening to looked after children, young people and care leavers cannot be overestimated. This principle is at the heart of the independent Care Review and increasingly underpins new policy development across all Directorates of the Scottish Government. The most recent of these making young care leavers exempt from Council Tax<sup>7</sup>.

This Section draws directly on feedback offered by looked after children and young people with care experience. Using lived experiences when developing corporate parenting plans is largely accepted throughout the public sector and has been embedded as the norm where front line delivery of services and support are concerned. While this is a new concept for those not directly delivering services or working with children and families, a great deal of energy has been directed at embracing corporate parenting responsibilities, Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) and becoming familiar with terminology around wellbeing.

Care experienced children and young people have been courageous in sharing their experiences in a number of ways; focus groups, working groups, committees, workshops and surveys. For some organisations these approaches had limited levels of success, due to low engagement by children and young people, while others have established and maintained a committed dialogue.

In instances where there was low engagement from Corporate Parents, as opposed to children and young people, their feedback understandably conveyed that they felt let down and disengaged, as the quotes demonstrate.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/local-government/council-tax/#care-leavers-exemption>

“They're not really there much - they don't really care much”  
“They listen but they don't act on it” “They act like they're listening, but I've not seen any change” “Who's that? I don't know, they don't speak to me” “They're not helpful yet they could be more helpful if they listened more and paid attention to what we do and why we do it” “We would like to know who our corporate parents are and we would like them to know us” “We would like our corporate parents to make time to have a real relationship with us” “We would like our corporate parents to really understand our journey” “We want our corporate parents to make changes for us when we need them” **Care experienced young people**

We know that taking time to build trusting relationships and to prepare children and young people to participate in this work is key and where areas have linked into existing forum such as ‘1000 Voices’, a local Champions Board or taken advantage of facilitation by organisations such as Who Cares? Scotland, the Children’s Parliament or local third sector organisations, they have significantly improved involvement by looked after children and care leavers.

Another tactic is to ensure those in the care system or with care experience are actively and routinely involved in the day-to-day corporate roles of key organisations. Fife Council, in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland, benefits from having young people as part of their interview process for all residential staff and the informal interview process for Social Work Advisers, Social Workers and Senior Practitioners.

“As a student of QMU, I am no longer overlooked - I am more than just a number. I have people who are 100% behind me and are helping me achieve my goals. This encouragement means I’ve developed a passion for learning and I always keep classes running late because I ask so many questions.” **Learner at Queen Margaret University**

“I am incredibly lucky to be where I am today, and am particularly grateful to my lecturer, who is one of the most vital people I have ever met. Her contribution to the university and her influence on the student experience is immense. My lecturer and QMU make me believe I can do it!” **Learner at Queen Margaret University**

Overall, the comments provided to Corporate Parents by looked after children and care leavers suggest children and young people want to paint an honest and balanced picture of promising practice as well as clear gaps. Young people have taken up opportunities to participate in interactive, relationship based channels to offer feedback on performance. Forums such as workshops, surveys and young people’s Boards were identified by young people as excellent opportunities to break down barriers, reduce stigma and influence change in specific aspects of delivery with immediate impact.

“I’ve changed since joining this group. I have more friends. I know others who are looked after. I’m more confident now, I’m able to talk to more people.” **Member of Seen + Heard Fife and Children’s Parliament**

North East Scotland College care experienced students have suggested the College do more to promote the good support available to learners from a care background via the existing website. Offers to provide student generated content and video/multimedia resources would better promote the commitment North East Scotland College has demonstrated to ensure additional support is easy to access so students feel well supported by teaching and key support staff.

Students openly requested that the College provide more substantial counselling and wellbeing services. Towards that they have suggested a Care Experienced Support Group be established, possibly in partnership with the Students Association, to provide group support on issues such as managing finances and living independently. The students also encouraged the College to better promote the good support offered by including more student generated content on the website to help reach a wider student audience.

“While I was at college I felt that the support I was given was adequate and I wasn’t made to feel different from other students” **Learner, Ayrshire College**

Another important group of organisations who have daily front line contact with children in care and care leavers is our emergency services. Echoing a common theme, it is acknowledged that frontline staff from these agencies will not readily know if a child or young person is care experienced when carrying out their day-to-day duties. Police Scotland has developed their understanding of what corporate parenting means in a number of ways. An Independent Advisory Group on Stop and Search created a Code of Practice which recognises the need for sections explicitly aimed at children and young people.

This Code of Practice was cognisant of how care experienced children and young people interpret their dealings with police officers, and the learning was incorporated within a national training programme for officers across Police Scotland. This tied in with existing work with the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (CYCJ) to develop their guidance document: ‘Identification of Looked After Young People and Care Leavers by Justice Agencies and Making Connections: Supporting the identification of care leavers in the justice system.’

**Police Scotland Team Building and Leadership Course** designed to build the trust of young people who traditionally may not have engaged with police and adopts a collaborative and proactive approach to diverting young people from engaging in criminal and antisocial behaviour.

“increased awareness of the types of behaviour that bring conflict with authority” “increased awareness of the issues” “better perception of the Police” “more positive perceptions of the future” **Participants’ feedback**

Therefore, the nature of the corporate parenting role will often include anything from adjusting day-to-day procedures in response to a previously unrealised insensitivity to essential signposting of a young person to relevant services. As such, it is essential that we listen to and respect children and young peoples’ views.

Providing safe, effective and person centred care is well established for these Corporate Parents; but the 2014 Act has contributed to a change in understanding and heightened awareness of care experienced children and young people in the community. This is a reminder to us all that any child or young person in need of assistance may well be care experienced.

“From this work placement, I have learnt how to work in a Comms environment and work as part of a team and I would recommend this experience to another young person as it was a great opportunity. Since completing my placement, I have started a full-time Digital Marketing position in Voluntary Action East Ren.” **16-year-old from East Renfrewshire Council Family Firm**

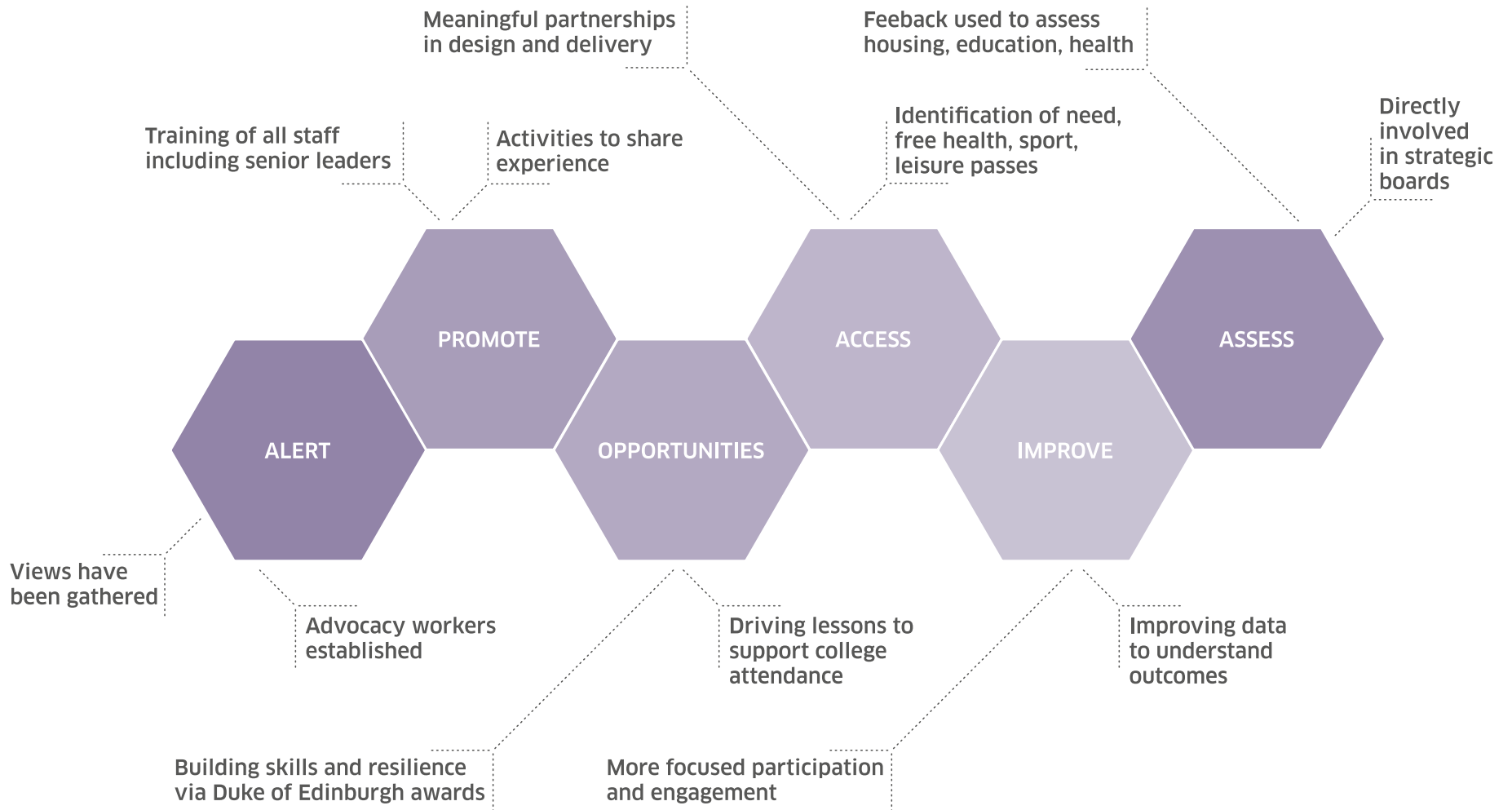


### 3) What does Corporate Parenting mean to Corporate Parents?

#### **Our Corporate Parenting Responsibilities for Looked After Children and Care Leavers**



# Corporate Parenting Responsibilities in Action



“Scotland wants to be a country that provides all children, no matter their circumstances, the best opportunities to grow, develop, and experience the same opportunities so that no individual child is disadvantaged or limited by disadvantage, neglect or poverty.” **Scottish Government Consultation on the Children and Young People Bill 2012**

“We made a commitment to ensure the views of care-experienced young people are considered when designing qualifications to meet their care needs. We aim to ensure their experiences and interests contribute to the thinking and design of Care qualifications for the Care sector. Where qualifications are being developed for the Care sector, people with care experience will now be invited to contribute to the development process. This will ensure their voice is heard and that the qualification takes due account of their care needs.” **Scottish Qualifications Authority**

All organisations were asked to provide updates on how looked after children, young people and care leavers were involved in planning and organisational improvement and how their outcomes were being assessed to measure improvement. This Section illustrates the common themes emerging from updates provided by Corporate Parents on their published corporate parenting Plans. All Plans should be accessible through organisations’ individual websites. Reassurance was also sought on how wellbeing needs of children and young people considered factors such as different age groups, gender, living arrangements, living with a disability and being respectful of cultural and religious beliefs. It is important that these issues be embedded in corporate parenting approaches, as well as any relevant geographical context.

Because day-to-day support needs to be entirely bespoke, Corporate Parents absolutely must embed the responsibility to assess the needs of looked after children and young people at every level within the organisation for there to be any meaningful and measurable impact. This is almost entirely dependent on engaging with those looked after children and care leavers and crucial for effective planning as Corporate Parents. For many organisations this is the embodiment of culture change, especially where the organisation is not concerned with direct delivery of services.

In addition to positive engagement methods already described, the updates provided by Corporate Parents demonstrate a range of success in reaching out to the local population and a common aspiration is to further increase effective engagement. In circumstances where a Corporate Parent does not know whether they support, employ or provide a service to any care experienced child or young people they should get the most out of positive collaboration by making contact with their looked after population through other, more front line, Corporate Parents to identify and consider local issues of importance.

Corporate Parents were asked to assess how eligible children interact with them individually or use services provided locally. Depending on the category of Corporate Parent, there were a number of approaches. For example, where data are already collected, quantitative information has been used to establish a baseline for engagement with looked after children and young people and care leavers. But for those with less front-facing roles, or organisations in the front line who reported difficulties in capturing specific views, the resources we have put in place through Who Cares? Scotland and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) will continue to offer support to maximise the positive effects of seeking input from the children and young people who are able to share their experiences. Although all the corporate parenting duties are equally important, any demonstrable improvement in support relies on credible assessment of need at an individual, local and national level.

**“We are engaging with pupils from aged 10 and so have become more aware of factors which may impact their lives and take we have taken positive steps to overcome these barriers at an earlier stage of the learner journey.” Shetland Islands Council**

Most Post-16 education bodies have tracked students who have declared their status as care experienced, which has enabled individual supports to be put in place where required. This approach often highlighted gaps in information, which were evident across most corporate parenting categories. Many organisations recognised up front a need to be better at coordinating and collating the views of care experienced children and young people on an on-going basis to inform planning or improve communication more generally.

For example, City of Glasgow College Student Experience Strategy committed to ensuring “Individual needs are anticipated at every step of the student journey and are met in a proactive and meaningful way”. The College has described how low engagement by care experienced students was tackled by moving away from focus groups to surveys and drop in student support services.

“We do this in a number of ways: Annual admissions review for full-time courses; Annual admissions review for part-time courses; Students First Impressions Questionnaire; Annual review of services; Student rep feedback; Statistical analysis of the numbers and profile of the students using our services. Annual service reviews.” **City of Glasgow College on assessing need/seeking views**

“We evaluate the numbers declaring against those accessing support to see what can be improved with the service. We also carry out coordinated support plans with those who interact with the service in order to provide more targeted support.” **Inverness College UHI**

Overall, local authorities were able to demonstrate on a number of levels how support for their care experienced population is monitored and assessed. For example, Fife Council undertake monthly file audits in each area team to review practice and outcomes for children and young people and to strengthen existing processes. East Ayrshire Children & Young People’s Strategic Partnership and East Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership have established a range of baselines across services that are used to assess engagement and inform stretch aims. They also incorporated feedback from commissioned advocacy support delivered by Who Cares? Scotland, Action for Children’s Turning the Corner service - for young people involved in or on the edge of offending - and Barnardo’s Defuse service for families who have been affected by issues such as domestic violence or alcohol misuse.

However, this is the absolute minimum to be expected from such crucial frontline service providers. Corporate parenting Plans and updates describe a variety of systems for engaging children and young people to ensure services are alert to their needs. It is evident that most frontline services now consider it essential to routinely gather information on the needs of looked after children and care leavers as well as monitoring engagement and outcomes.

Towards that, many local authorities reference their Children's Services Plan. Statutory Guidance on Part 3 (Children's Services Planning)<sup>8</sup> of the 2014 Act was published by the Scottish Government in December 2016. It provides local authorities and health boards, working in partnership with other public bodies and organisations, with information and advice about how they should exercise the functions conferred by Part 3. Under these provisions, every Children's Services Plan must set out the range of high quality services available to children, young people and their families at the time they need them.

The importance of supporting children and young people in a way that includes their families and local communities resonates well with corporate parenting duties and principles. As part of our roles as Corporate Parents Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government created a Corporate Parenting Champion to engage directly with Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) on policies including Children's Services Planning and as part of Scottish Government-wide engagement with partners.

**“Meeting our collective corporate parenting responsibilities relies on effective communication and accountability across a whole range of organisations and services. As the Scottish Government Corporate Parent Champion I am leading the charge to respond to feedback from our partners and looking for opportunities to work with CPPs to examine the challenges in areas such as social work, health and education. One of my aims is to build capacity through strengthened relationships across Scotland.” Iona Colvin, Scottish Government Chief Social Work Adviser and Corporate Parenting Champion**

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/8683>

Future corporate parenting Plans and Reports will be well placed to build on the detail offered thus far. Corporate Parents across all categories were united in their commitment to measuring the impact of corporate parenting moving forward and enhance levels of engagement with looked after children and care leavers.

Helping our children and young people to see how much they can achieve, nurturing their ambition and seeing that ambition realised is a key responsibility for this Government, for Corporate Parents and for wider society.

“Ayrshire College was a huge part of my life and really helped me realise who I want to be. The support staff would keep in contact with me throughout the year to make sure I was getting on well with my studies. The student association played a huge part in helping me find the role I am in now and the degree I am perusing (sic). I never knew there was anyone else fighting for my rights until I found out about the care experienced executive position. Once in post so many more doors opened for me and I met so many wonderful people” **Learner, Ayrshire College**

#### 4) A Wider View of Our Corporate Parenting Duties and Responsibilities

“The college offers great support for all care experienced students and the Learning Support team and Horizon Centre is always available to all students. Don’t ever feel like you are on your own because New College Lanarkshire is with you every step of the way.” **Learner, New College Lanarkshire**

This Section takes a wider view of the background to and context of corporate parenting. It makes links with selected policies of significance, which together comprise a comprehensive framework with a common feature, improving outcomes for all of Scotland’s children and young people.

The 2014 Act and Statutory Guidance 2015<sup>9</sup> encourage preventative measures, rather than reactive responses whenever a care experienced child, young person or their family needs help. They set out actions for the public sector to deliver to meet the Scottish Government’s ambition for making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. Focusing public sector reform towards early intervention and prolonged support for valued, trusted relationships places emphasis on improving outcomes for children and young people and their families and carers.

“The team is flexible and willing to work out of office hours and do anything for young people that ordinarily in Social Work would not be seen as normal and they are very approachable in every way. They are constantly involved with young people in making decisions, not just individual decisions but decisions involving outings, events even things involving the service.” **Care experienced young person on East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership Youth Intensive Support Service**

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/08/5260>



This approach builds on previous commitments such as *These Are Our Bairns: A Guide for Community Planning Partnerships on Being a Good Corporate Parent*<sup>10</sup> in 2008 and the *Future Delivery of Public Services*<sup>11</sup> by the Commission chaired by Dr Campbell Christie in 2011. This is the ‘Scottish approach’ to design and delivery of public services. As a nation, we absolutely recognise the fundamental need to move beyond silo working and drive necessary change to embed collaborative working in Scotland.

Corporate parenting responsibilities are directed at those in the public sector who, because of their statutory role, must make every effort to fully understand the issues faced by Scotland’s looked after children and care leavers in order to respond to their needs. Section 6 of this Report on Promising Practice, includes some working examples of how Corporate Parents are actively collaborating.

Corporate parenting complements our national approach to children’s rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)<sup>12</sup> and our eight wellbeing indicators, commonly referred to as SHANARRI, which are illustrated in Figure 2 and explained in more detail in the Scottish Government’s Understanding Wellbeing leaflet<sup>13</sup>. Taken together these approaches represent a fundamentally holistic view of how to approach each child or young person’s needs; identifying strengths as well as barriers to growth and development.

This ensures that we are all explicitly focused on the task of ‘safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers.

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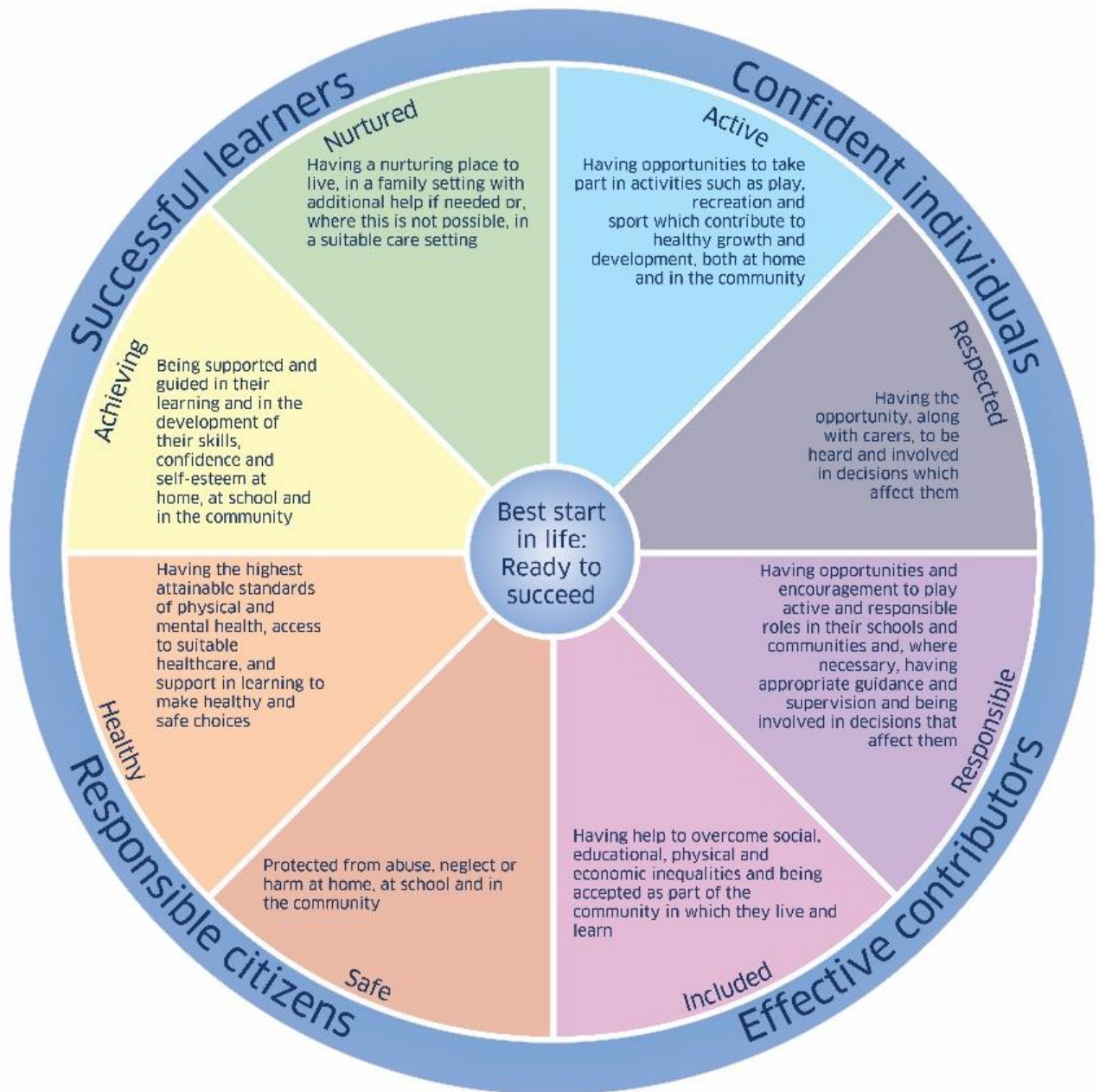
<sup>10</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/bairns-guide-community-planning-partnerships-being-good-corporate-parent/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0>

<sup>12</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/policies/human-rights/childrens-rights/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00500774.pdf>

Figure 2, Our eight wellbeing indicators



In addition, each Corporate Parent must prepare, keep under review, and publish a corporate parenting Plan and, report as required, on how corporate parenting responsibilities have been exercised. This includes providing information to Scottish Ministers to inform each Report to Parliament and acting on any subsequent ministerial guidance.

Scottish Ministers, including the Scottish Government Executive Agencies<sup>14</sup> and Scottish Government Directorates, are all Corporate Parents with exemptions from some duties set out in sections 61 – 64. However, all are included in Ministers' early commitment to the principles of corporate parenting and the First Minister is recognised by care experienced children and young people as de facto 'Chief Corporate Parent'. Corporate Parents are illustrated in Figure 3

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<sup>14</sup> At June 2018 Executive Agencies are Accountant in Bankruptcy, Disclosure Scotland, Education Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, Scottish Public Pensions Agency, Student Awards Agency for Scotland and Transport Scotland. Historic Scotland, now Historic Environment Scotland, was an Executive Agency in April 2015 but has since changed status to a non-departmental public body with charitable status.

## Our Corporate Parents



## 5) Reflecting on Our Actions and Progress since 2015

“We are a society which treats all our people with kindness, dignity and compassion, respects the rule of law, and acts in an open and transparent way” **National Performance Framework 2018**

### Actions

Before the 2014 Act came into force Scottish Government commissioned Statutory Guidance and bespoke training to establish and build organisational awareness of corporate parenting. Over the last year, we have augmented these practical supports by engaging with all 124 individuals or organisations in each of the 24 named Corporate Parents in schedule 4 of the 2014 Act and seeking specific evidence of activities and improvements to inform this Report.

This helped to acquire a national sense of organisational awareness, uptake of training provided by Who Cares? Scotland and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) and what measures are in place to review and evaluate Plans. Corporate parenting Plans published online and updates commissioned by the Scottish Government set out varying levels of detail around planning approaches, collaboration and levels of engagement with children and young people.

By summer 2017 progress updates had been completed by approximately two thirds of the 124 organisations. Most had prepared and published their Plan and a small proportion were still working to develop their Plan. The methods and rate of progress of developing Plans was varied and this is set out in more detail through some examples later.

In early 2018, Maree Todd, Minister for Childcare and Early Years asked for specific information and this second round of engagement focussed on processes in place to review and evaluate Plans, to show the journey of understanding from 2015 until now and to elaborate on the priorities for improvement over the next three years. We also specifically sought feedback provided from care experienced children and young people on how corporate parenting has made a difference to their lives as well as an honest account of the challenges and opportunities identified by Corporate Parents.

## Progress

“We grow up loved, safe and respected so we realise our full potential”

### New Outcome in National Performance Framework 2018

This section reflects in more detail on the corporate parenting journey undertaken over the past three years, including some specific examples at Appendix A of nine organisations selected as examples of each category<sup>15</sup> of Corporate Parent across the public sector. The Scottish Government plays a part in every issue that matters to people in Scotland and so our responsibilities in relation to the issues of importance to looked after children and care leavers are wide ranging at an organisational level and as leaders of change.

Our Programmes for Government (PFG)<sup>16</sup>, now published annually, reflect the Scottish Government’s continued focus on “Getting It Right For Every Child” and making sure our children and families get the practical and financial support they need. Alongside this, our Getting it Right for Looked After Children and Young People Strategy<sup>17</sup> takes this to a more detailed delivery level; setting out the three priorities of early engagement, early permanence and improving the quality of care; with the importance of relationships and stability as crucial underpinning principles.

The revised National Performance Framework<sup>18</sup> (NPF), launched in June this year, articulates the progress of culture change and collaborative policy development. The NPF provides a broad measure of national and societal wellbeing, incorporating a range of economic, social and environmental indicators and targets.

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<sup>15</sup> Commissioner/Ombudsman, Scottish Ministers, Health Board, Local Authority, Non-Ministerial Department, Other Significant National Body, Post-16 Education Body, Public Body, Special NHS Service

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/09/8468>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/11/2344/0>

<sup>18</sup> [http://nationalperformance.gov.scot/?\\_ga=2.113011143.210375679.1529495913-489799653.1528118560](http://nationalperformance.gov.scot/?_ga=2.113011143.210375679.1529495913-489799653.1528118560)

These collaborative measures support the aims of this government and wider public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. However, Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government are also aware of the need to embed a sense of 'love' in all developing policy and to consider the beneficial impact of strong nurturing relationships in the future delivery of public services. Towards that, one of the new Outcomes is "We grow up loved, safe and respected so we realise our full potential".

Ministers and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) attended corporate parenting training in 2016 delivered by care experienced young people, Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS. This approach puts love at the forefront of putting legislation into practice and has been followed up through direct engagement at constituency level where MSPs are increasingly aware of the issues of importance to their local looked after children and care leavers.

In 2017, the First Minister and Cabinet Ministers met with children and young people for the first time to discuss the issues that were affecting the lives of those growing up in Scotland. At the meeting, four Members of the Children's Parliament (MCPs) from East Lothian joined MSYPs from the Scottish Youth Parliament to share their views with Ministers. Following the discussion, it was decided to make the meeting an annual event, so that Scotland's children's and young people's voices are heard by those who make decisions. Scotland is the only country in the world committed to ensuring that children and young people's voices are heard at this level of government. The second Young People's Cabinet met in March 2018.

**"I liked how we got to speak out. It was a chance to speak to important people about your feelings and what you think. I feel happy because everyone got the chance to be heard!" 12-year old Member of the Children's Parliament following Children and Young People's Scottish Cabinet**

The First Minister and Permanent Secretary have both taken the opportunity to share their experience as senior women with corporate parenting responsibilities to offer programmes of work shadowing and mentoring support to young women, with a particular focus on attracting those with experience of care.

## Seek Views and Assessing

“Young people in South Ayrshire do not seem to have high expectations of their corporate parents. However, when we have been able to engage with young people and support them to ask questions and show that they will be listened to, they open up.  
**South Ayrshire Council Participation Assistant**

Corporate Parents were asked to assess how eligible children interact with them individually or use services provided locally. Depending on the category of Corporate Parent, there were a number of approaches. Argyll and Bute Council SUPPORT forum was designed by care experienced young people. The Forum comprises fun activity days where professionals and young people mix, develop relationships, listen to each other and ask questions. This resulted in a film featuring care experienced young people talking about their experiences of being looked after and what the term “Corporate Parent” means to them.

Where data are already collected, quantitative information may already exist to help establish a baseline for engagement with looked after children and young people. For example, most Post-16 education bodies are already tracking students who have declared their status as care experienced, which has enabled individual supports to be put in place where required.

This approach has proved useful to highlighted gaps in information and many organisations, across all categories of Corporate Parent, recognised up front a need to be better at coordinating and collating the views of care experienced children and young people on an on-going basis to inform planning or simply improve communication in general.

“Ambassadors are listening to my views and valuing me”  
“Corporate Parents to treat us like they would their own child and offer the same opportunities to young people as if they were their own child” **East Lothian Council Champions Board**



Where a more direct approach to engaging care experienced children and young people was possible and appropriate, organisations successfully established more interactive, relationship based channels for obtaining feedback on performance. Forums such as workshops, surveys and young people's Boards have enhanced existing research to good effect by focusing feedback on specific aspects of delivery.

With 2018 being Year of Young People<sup>19</sup> at the half way point the programme continues to reflect the issues that affect the lives of Scotland's young people. Young people, including those with care experience, were at the very heart of planning. A group of young leaders, Communic18 who are between eight and twenty six years of age, are making key decisions and influencing how the Year is run.

Fife Council has used a number of ways to ensure children and young people have direct involvement in creating and reviewing corporate parenting Plans. 2BHeard groups are a forum for care experienced young people across Fife to meet on a weekly basis and discuss the issues that are relevant to them. 'Listen up!' is a strategy for including care experienced children and young people. 'The pledge' is an 11 point commitment to all looked after children in the authority. 'Seen and Heard' groups provide an opportunity for children aged 9-12 to reflect on their care experiences and learn about their rights in a fun and creative environment.

**Care experienced young people in Clackmannanshire Council want corporate parents to “Listen to them”, “respect them”, “ensure they have as few moves as possible if they are looked after and accommodated”, “help them to have good family contact”, “help them with getting a secure and safe place to live when they are moving into adulthood” and “Help them access work, training and educational opportunities”**

Overall, local authorities provided reassurance on a number of levels about how support for their care experienced population is monitored and assessed. Corporate parenting Plans and updates describe a variety of systems for engaging children and young people to ensure services are alert to their needs. It is evident that frontline services consider it essential to routinely gather information on the needs of looked after children and care leavers as well as monitoring engagement and outcomes. However, they must recognise this is the absolute minimum to be expected from such crucial frontline service providers.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://yoyp2018.scot/>

Towards that, many local authorities reference their Children's Services Plan; setting out a range of high quality services available to children, young people and their families at the time they need them. Midlothian Council Planning Partnership have undertaken a Children's Services Review and analysed local data to identify trends and patterns in their care experienced children and young people. Based on this research they introduced 12+ teams to better ensure young people are provided with continuity of care throughout their care journey and are not transitioned into other teams at sixteen years of age. Assessing and reviewing services is supported through a new partnership with 'Mind Of My Own' to develop an App to enhance opportunities to seek feedback from young people. The importance of supporting children and young people in a way which includes their families and local communities was recognised and highlighted across many service providers.

As an organisation, the Scottish Government employs people from all walks of life, with all sorts of skills, strengths and talents. This means the organisation is ambitious about diversity, wanting to reflect modern Scotland in the workforce and the work we do. As a Corporate Parent this includes supporting staff to understand corporate parenting and working collaboratively with stakeholders and leaders across the public sector and wider. One important action has been to appoint a Corporate Parenting Champion to spearhead information sharing and collaboration between Scottish Government and Community Planning Partnerships to improve service planning and delivery across Scotland.

The organisation is also revising the current modern apprentice programme and senior leaders, including the Permanent Secretary, have established work shadowing programmes for young people, including those with care experience. The Scottish Public Pensions Agency works with Developing the Young Workforce to offer opportunities to young people from different backgrounds and circumstances. This includes workshops, mentoring opportunities and a number of young people have joined the agency on their Modern Apprentice scheme.

Executive Agencies reflect very well the diverse nature of the public sector. They are an assorted group of organisations, most of which in fulfilling their functions do not provide any service or support direct to care experienced children, young people or their families. With this in mind, corporate parenting Plans and updates from organisations and individuals have been developed creatively to allow for statutory functions to be approached in new ways to ensure they maximise their ability to make an impact.

Accountant in Bankruptcy (AiB) is an excellent example of a public sector organisation that does not have direct involvement in providing services specifically focussed on care experienced young people. However, AiB has invested time increasing awareness of corporate parenting at all levels of the organisation by creating corporate parenting specialists tasked with sharing their knowledge through training events, intranet articles/guidance and newsletter updates. The organisation has also identified synergies between corporate parenting and existing vulnerable people policies. As part of their assessment of how AiB can better meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers, they have revised the policy to reflect the corporate parenting duties.

### **Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement**

“A desire for the lived experience of young people to better inform service design and delivery is central to our future priorities and approach to corporate parenting. The impressive and highly influential Fun Young Individuals group is now poised to take forward a wide range of work which includes staff training and raising wider awareness of the needs of often misunderstood care experienced young people.” **Perth and Kinross Council**

Self-evaluation and review are key elements of meeting existing responsibilities and delivering measurable improvement. Scotland’s improvement programme, Permanence and Care Excellence Programme (PACE) allows us to test small changes based on local practice to ensure that the changes deliver the difference that is anticipated, adapting these along the way before implementing into business as usual. By taking this iterative approach to change, we can engage all partners in a whole system approach and adapt what we deliver based on local data, knowledge and practice and building on learning within the local context. National stretch aims are in place to cover the entire journey of the child focusing on key decision-making points across the system.

Regulatory and scrutiny bodies such as the Care Inspectorate, Scottish Housing Regulator, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Scottish Social Services Council, Education Scotland and Commissioners all have existing responsibilities to hold other Corporate Parents to account. This involves challenging and supporting as necessary to bring about continuous improvements.

The Care Inspectorate has care experienced young people on inspection teams and is currently revising joint inspections of services for children and young people in Community Planning Partnerships. This revised model now takes a more focused look at the experiences and outcomes for children and young people who need protection or are care experienced. The Care Inspectorate also involved care experienced young people in developing a graduated programme of awareness raising with staff and corporate parenting responsibilities have been included in the induction programme.

Measuring and recording continuous improvement for different statutory purposes has usefully created or strengthened links across different aspects of service delivery. Out of necessity, many organisations have built corporate parenting into other appropriate planning or reporting cycles. Timeframes committed to by different Corporate Parents range from annual reporting to senior management or Parliament with commitments to revise a three-year plan in full after three years to so called 'live documents' that are continually updated to reflect the ongoing feedback and learning. For example, Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and the National Convener include corporate parenting in monthly reporting to the Senior Management Team, quarterly reporting to the CHS Board and their Annual Report, which is laid before the Scottish Parliament. Scottish Borders Council corporate parenting Plan is described as a 'dynamic document', which is reviewed on an on-going basis but formally updated and published annually.

## **Training and Support for Corporate Parents**

“support and understanding at senior levels” “meaningfully engage with care experienced young people” “collaboration and shared learning” “build on the organisation’s unique potential”  
**Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS on maximising our impact as Corporate Parents**

Since before Part 9 came into force in April 2015 our partner organisations have been on hand to offer essential support all Corporate Parents. Appendix B includes a more detailed, but non-exhaustive, summary of support and where to find it. Each resource offers slightly different perspective enabling staff in different organisations with different statutory roles to learn about the specific responsibilities and how they relate to their organisation.

This hands-on approach was tailored to best meet the differing needs within such a broad range of organisations; all of whom have varying degrees of contact with care experienced children and young people. Importantly, it also reflects the ambition to draw us all together as Corporate Parents to do more and do it better.

The Scottish Government provided funding support to develop advice and resources on corporate parenting. These are available from Who Cares? Scotland on the Corporate Parenting Learning Hub<sup>20</sup> and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) Corporate Parenting website<sup>21</sup>.

Training and support provided by Who Cares? Scotland has centred on bespoke learning for organisations at different stages of understanding corporate parenting responsibilities. This incorporated real life experiences of those with experience of care to ensure relevant and impactful engagement. Training was delivered as live face-to-face staff sessions, available as online digital resources and as feedback to those preparing and reviewing corporate parenting Plans.

Support from CELCIS reflects their expertise in implementation and their developing understanding of the evolving needs of organisations as they honed their practical approach to embedding corporate parenting responsibilities on an organisation-wide basis. CELCIS also developed the statutory guidance on Part 9 and worked collaboratively with Corporate Parents to develop a series of Practice Implementation Notes. Reflections from both organisations recognise that progress has been made. Corporate Parents are now better placed to understand the needs, circumstances and strengths of our looked after children and care leavers.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/what-we-do/support-to-corporate-parents/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/spotlight/implementing-corporate-parenting-duties/>

Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS have observed a number of conditions must exist to successfully embed these messages. These can be summarised into themes, which very much reflect the feedback from Corporate Parents themselves: support and understanding at senior levels within organisations is essential, commitment to co-design, collaboration and shared learning between organisations immeasurably enhances the extent to which organisations can best meet the responsibilities and duties, and building on the organisations' unique potential as Corporate Parents to meaningfully engage with their relevant population of care experienced children and young people will maximise the impact they make.

## 6) Sharing Promising Practice to Overcome Challenges

The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland established a Corporate Parenting Collaboration Group with an open, rotating membership to share learning, consider specific issues of importance and to take a more overarching approach to holding other corporate parents to account on promoting and safeguarding children's rights. Membership has included Creative Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Mental Welfare Commission, Health Improvement Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Scottish Legal Aid Board.

This Section of the Report draws on feedback from all categories of Corporate Parent to set out as balanced a picture as possible of common challenges reported to date in implementing corporate parenting responsibilities and duties and examples of promising practice emerging all across Scotland to tackle these barriers.

By far the most challenging features identified by Corporate Parents, as impacting on their ability to better meet the responsibilities and duties, can be categorised as (i) difficulties in identifying and/or engaging with care experienced children and young people, (ii) inadequate IT/data collection, (iii) limitations of staff/resources and (iv) poor understanding of what corporate parenting means.

Where organisations deliver their corporate objectives in isolation, there is potential for ineffective communication, delayed decision making, poor assessment of an individual's needs and lack of person-centred support. This inevitably leads to inefficiencies and pressure on the system. These messages can be heard loud and clear from those care experienced children and young people who have experienced what they feel is impersonal support at times of crisis rather or unnecessary administrative barriers rather than a dedicated and transparent consideration of what can be done to support them in their specific circumstances.

Some further and higher education Corporate Parents have reported limited success in obtaining views from care experienced students who may not want to engage but, where students have offered feedback this suggests they feel well supported and appreciate having access to a variety of light touch and more intense support. For example, drop in sessions, known student mentors to contact remotely or in person.

“the support is helpful considering people's needs” “the support that has been provided to me has been outstanding and has helped me through the college year” “I think if I hadn't been at College I don't know what I would have done to keep myself busy and when I am finding it hard I always have someone to talk to” **Dumfries and Galloway College students**

“I've personally found the support from the university very helpful since coming to study here. Whenever I have a problem, it is easy to talk to someone. The university provided a tutor for me when I was struggling with my course and I feel this has helped a lot” **University of St Andrews student**

Personal views and testimonials from children and young people with experience of care commonly described where trusted adults have helped children and young people to overcome difficulties and make progress in different aspects of their lives. Looked after children and care leavers also celebrated achievements at school as well as opportunities to shape policy, develop new skills or remove barriers to accessing local amenities.

On the whole, updates for this Report demonstrate more success where there is good evidence of engaging with looked after children and care leavers, good partnership working, good senior level support, clear corporate parenting goals and appropriate staff training.

**NHS Highland and Highland Council** have adopted a lead-agency model where the council has overarching responsibility for looked after children in order to ensure closer working on priorities for looked after children.



“Evidence shows that integrated service models promote joint working between NHS, social care, education and health staff to provide wrap around care and opportunities to share best practice to provide joined up care.”

Different organisations have taken a number of different tactics to raise awareness of corporate parenting and continue to learn from these approaches considering what works best and which partner organisations might offer opportunities to work together or share learning at all levels. The North East Scotland College provided staff with networking opportunities facilitated by the college, Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS, which facilitated the development of the College’s corporate parenting Plan. The College also worked in collaboration with other Corporate Parents from college development network, local authorities, schools and colleges.

Similarly, East Lothian Council Champions Board identified seven priorities for change for the council. Staff have received training to support better understanding of issues face by looked after children and care leavers. A Champion’s Board film was also produced to educate, raise awareness and highlight the importance of relationships to successful corporate parenting. The use of film and other digital media has featured highly in a number of approaches described by Corporate Parents.

**Police Scotland** supported and enabled staff to learn about corporate parenting responsibilities by delivering training, which raised awareness of care experienced children and young people. This was particularly poignant in the instance of officers responding to concerns about the number of care experienced children and young people who had been adversely affected by stop and search policies. Learning from this training will be taken forward as one strategy to highlight what is meaningful for the complex and diverse roles performed by officers and staff.

Where corporate parenting is embraced at a community or national level, it promotes more effective and transparent support for care experience children and young people.

**South Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership** established a Champions Board, which meets with local elected members, 6 Locality Planning Groups across South Ayrshires, Ayrshire College, University of West of Scotland, NHS Ayrshire and Arran Community Safety, Local authority education, community learning and development colleagues, Young Scot, local youth forum, VASA Third sector interface and voluntary sector organisations such as Children 1st and Aberlour Trust.

The extent to which each Corporate Parent has collaborated with others to develop and jointly deliver activities is set out in the majority of the corporate parenting Plans. Local collaboration has been used to good effect by most Corporate Parents responsible for front line delivery and by organisations who recognise that local partnership will most likely best improve the outcomes of their looked after children and care leavers.

Aberdeen City Council recognised the value of support from other Corporate Parents as well as strong support from local politicians and the third sector interface. Again, Champions Board members were acknowledged for their role in developing and delivering actions within the Plan.

The 2014 Act specifically requires Corporate Parents to collaborate for a number of reasons, which link directly to the 'Scottish Approach'. Firstly, to promote a better common understanding of the duties and responsibilities so Scotland's public-funded organisations or individuals can really relate to the day to day issues being faced by our looked after children and care leavers.

Secondly, to improve opportunities, services and support for our young people by considering the bigger picture, such as the positive influence each Corporate Parent can have at different moments in a child or young person's life. Because corporate parenting responsibilities should complement the remit of each organisation or individual's primary functions, collaborating with others proactively expands the reach and influence of Scotland's Corporate Parents. This has been taken on board and used to good effect by many organisations, some of which have been highlighted in this Report.

It is clear from corporate parenting Plans and updates that the perception of and approach to corporate parenting is just as diverse as the children and young people to whom it is directed. Different organisations and individuals understand corporate parenting in different ways depending on their statutory responsibilities and role, if any, in direct support of looked after children and care leavers. As a collective, we have definitely moved to a position where corporate parenting has far greater prominence across the public sector and awareness amongst looked after children and care leavers continues to increase. This is evidence of proactive approaches taken within organisations, good use of the excellent training and support offered by Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS and effective communication to ensure we are aware of our role and responsibilities as a Corporate Parents.

Such a rich variety of organisational functions and the associated range of possible approaches encourages collaboration and necessitates creative corporate parenting to maximise possible impact on the lives of our looked after children and care leavers.

In many ways, this underpins the rudimentary principles of being a Corporate Parent, to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver. In meeting these responsibilities, every organisation and individual has their own corporate parenting journey to go on.

## 7) Building Momentum for Going Forward - What next for Corporate Parents?

**Corporate parenting, building momentum for going forward**



This Report has used a relatively small number of illustrative examples to describe the different approaches taken over the past three years by our diverse community of Corporate Parents to meet the corporate parenting responsibilities and duties. Each unique organisation has created their individual Plan of measurable activities and outcomes to evidence their commitment as Corporate Parents to uphold the rights and secure the wellbeing of their looked after children and care leavers.

There is no doubt that the 2014 Act has taken the concept of evidence-based improvements in support for care experienced children and young people to another level. This is why corporate parenting is ambitious and challenging but this is also why each individual and organisation has something distinctive to offer as part of the wider landscape.

Corporate parenting Plans and updates show that, in keeping with the legislation, each organisation has taken a unique approach over the past three years. This is illustrated to an extent in Appendix A which summarises the journey of a single representative Corporate Parent from each of the nine categories from 2015 to 2018 and looking forward to 2021.

Feedback from care experienced children and young people has been clear; they want their views to be heard and acted upon. There are no excuses for not taking this on board today, tomorrow and forever. Our children and young people understand corporate parenting responsibilities and, where the opportunities exist, share their experiences with confidence in order to identify barriers and seek solutions.

**“We set the agenda to meet with our corporate parents and so far have explored the theme of health and wellbeing. Our next Champions Board meeting will be talking about Housing. It feels good to be listened to and that we can make changes for the better” 18-year-old member of East Renfrewshire Champions Board**

This is echoed by Corporate Parents from all parts of Scotland throughout the different parts of our public sector who recognise the importance of this in principle and in practice. The Report therefore notes the outstanding success of Champions Boards and other similar approaches as a forum for our children and young people to have direct, meaningful involvement in all levels of decision making.

Collectively these amount to an honest account of challenges and steps taken to overcome them. Almost all areas of progress have evidenced and benefitted from good partnership with other Corporate Parents.

As Corporate Parents, we have had three years to digest the duties and responsibilities and reflect on where our role already supports corporate parenting and where we can create opportunities to do more. We can already see themes in what works and where there are gaps. Ironically, they are practically the same. Over coming months and throughout the next three year reporting period the evidence clearly points to a focus on:

- **seeking the views** of looked after children and young people and care leavers,
- **assessing** their needs and how you can address these,
- **collaborating** with other Corporate Parents to share learning and reach a wider care experienced population, and
- **securing support and understanding** at senior levels of each organisation.

With this in mind, it seems appropriate that the final words in the Report belong to Perth and Kinross Fun Young Individuals who, in describing their experience of working with corporate parents, have more or less captured the essence of feedback from many of our looked after children and young people. These opportunities must not be missed.

“As Fun Young Individuals (FYI) we describe ourselves as a 'family' we look out for each other in many different situations. FYI has helped many of us to become more **knowledgeable**, this is down to meeting up with different professionals and **inviting different professional** to our Monday meetings. Meeting every Monday and **getting to know our corporate parents** have increased our **opportunities**, many members of the group have been **involved** in different meetings which have led to **important decisions** being made, this has made the group feel like they are being **listened to** and they would like this to continue in the future. The group feel it is important to **communicate and feedback** to professionals about what we think important whilst also getting feedback about meetings we don't attend so we are **kept in the loop**. Ultimately FYI feel like group Monday meetings have had a real **positive impact** on many of their personal life's and would like the group to continue with the same purpose which is to **help other young people** to feel they can be as open as we are and to feel part of the family!!” **Members of Perth & Kinross Fun Young Individuals**

### Three Year Corporate Parenting Journey across the Public Sector

For the purposes of illustration, the 124 organisations and individuals covered by the 24 Corporate Parents listed in schedule 4 of the 2014 Act have been separated into nine categories, depending on their statutory role. These are Commissioner/Ombudsman, Scottish Ministers, Health Board, Local Authority, Non-Ministerial Department, Other Significant National Body, Post-16 Education Body, Public Body and Special NHS Service.

#### Commissioner and Ombudsman – The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Scotland

**Where were you?** The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003 created the role of the Commissioner, who is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on the nomination of the Scottish Parliament.

Our role is to promote and safeguard the rights of all children and young people under the age of 18 and the Act extended this to 21 for care experienced young people. The Act also places a specific requirement on us to “pay particular attention to groups of children and young people who do not have other adequate means by which they can make their views known” and this has always been interpreted as including care experienced children and young people.

In exercising our functions, we must pay attention to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In this case Article 20 of the UNCRC outlines the rights specific to care experienced children and young people.

**Where are you now?** We have undertaken the following work to improve the understanding and quality of corporate parenting.

1. Accountability – We have worked to hold other corporate parents to account as part of our core work.
2. Building Ability – We have established a group to support other smaller corporate parents. This is attended by a range of organisations who were given corporate parenting responsibilities by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.



3. Participation – We have worked with care experienced-led organisations such as Who Cares? Scotland and the Care Review and have regularly involved care experienced children in our work.

**Where you are going?** Our Corporate Parenting duties are mainstreamed within all our work and this is outlined in our Strategic Plan which is available at: <https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/our-plan.pdf>

## Scottish Ministers - Student Awards Agency Scotland

**Where were you?** In April 2015 the concept of corporate parenting was an unknown quantity for SAAS. However, the agency has a long established mechanism in place to support care experienced students which predates 2015. The Accommodation Grant for Care Leavers is a financial award which helps towards accommodation costs during the summer months. Care experienced students can apply for up to a maximum of £105 per week.

**Where are you now?** SAAS is fully supportive of Scottish Ministers in their role as Corporate Parents and we embrace the values and responsibilities which corporate parenting represents. In 2017, following recommendations from the Commission for Widening Access (COWA), the Scottish Government introduced the Care Experienced Students' Bursary. The bursary is a non-income assessed, non-repayable financial award which is available to Scottish care experienced students in Higher Education. SAAS was responsible for the successful implementation of the bursary and the ongoing administration of this scheme.

SAAS also consulted directly with care experienced students. Through this work SAAS has developed a bespoke Digital application process and co-designed information and guidance related to the bursary. Our bespoke service has helped raise awareness of the bursary, whilst promoting the Scottish Government agenda of widening access into Higher Education. In late 2017 we also published our inaugural Corporate Parenting Plan, setting our commitments to Care Experienced students accessing Higher Education in Scotland.

**Where are you going?** SAAS has a firm commitment to continuous improvement across all of the services and functions of the Agency.



We will continue to develop service delivery and outreach to support and promote the needs of care experienced students. We will be responsive to the needs of care experienced students when shaping future operational policies and procedures. Alongside our Outreach work, we will continue to work closely with stakeholders to promote the existence of the bursary and to improve our information and guidance along with our digital application based on insights from stakeholders and care experienced students.

## A health board – NHS Borders

**Where were you?** In 2015 NHS Borders had made progress in implementing the CEL16 circulated in 2009. We were raising awareness across the organisation about the needs of looked after children and our roles and responsibilities as a corporate parent. In 2015 we were developing a health needs assessment and care pathway and we were working to improve communication about the notification of looked after children from Scottish Borders Council. From a multiagency context the first Corporate Parenting Strategy was developed and agreed in the Scottish Borders in 2007.

It was in response to “Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better” (2007). The current version of the Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy 2014-2018 is the third iteration of the multi-agency strategy.

**Where are you now?** There is an awareness and understanding of Corporate Parenting at a senior managerial level across agencies in the Scottish Borders.

NHS Borders has a health care pathway and provision of the health needs assessment is established as recommended through CEL16 and the ‘Guidance for Health Assessments for Looked After Children in Scotland’.

Employability services are increasingly working in partnership in providing employment and training opportunities. Since 2015 NHS Borders has developed opportunities for 2 care experienced young people per year to undertake a Modern Apprenticeship.

**Where are you going?** The Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting Strategy is currently being reviewed and a new strategy developed for 2018-2022. The strategy and plan will be based on Section 58 of Part 9 - Corporate Parenting of the Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Greater awareness-raising across NHS Borders of Corporate Parenting and its importance , To improve the support and opportunity for health needs assessment to Looked After Children in kinship care, to re-focus the role of the school nurse on public health priority, Systematic participation of children and young people in service delivery, Improved multi-agency, partnership practice developments, Measurable improvements across services for looked after children and young people and care experienced young people.

### A local authority – Children’s Services Executive Group on behalf of Glasgow City Community Planning Partnership

**Where were you?** Corporate Parenting Policy and a Corporate Parenting Champions’ Board in place since 2007, a percentage of Commonwealth Apprenticeship and Job Fund places were ring fenced to provide opportunities for care experienced young people since 2010 and in 2011 Council Leader launches annual awards’ initiative and employment support for young people looked after or leaving care. After the 2014 Act was introduced corporate parenting training became mandatory for elected members.

**Where are you now?** Collaborative working across the city has improved engagement by young people. In 2015 and 2017 corporate parenting events were hosted by the Champions’ Board, in 2017 Glasgow Corporate Parent Forum was established so all corporate parents meet quarterly, in 2018 information about what each corporate parent has to offer will go on a public facing website for access by children, young people and corporate parents. A corporate parenting awareness video with input from Who Cares? Scotland and young people will become part of an e-learning module to be launched during 2018.

A major transformation programme in HSCP Children’s Services, proposes a shift in the balance of care from residential accommodation and out of Glasgow City placements to one which provides family and community based supports within the city. During 2017/18 a substantial decrease in the number of young people being placed in residential care establishments was achieved.

Implementation of a multi-agency improvement programme using LEAN methodology by Educational Psychology Services will focus on improving support for young people in placements outside Glasgow City. The MCR Programme is now fully embedded in Glasgow City Council as a key driver in delivering the corporate parenting expectations. It has now delivered such impact that the learning and framework is being shared with other local authorities and beyond.

**Where are you going?** All staff will be more aware of their corporate parenting role and responsibilities. Young people will be informed about the range of careers and opportunities available to them from an earlier age. Children's Services' transformation programme will demonstrate a substantial shift in investment and activity to community based and family support services over a three to five year period. Information for children and young people will be more accessible including maximising the use of digital technology. Work with young people to make sure what we have on offer is what they want and the best we can offer.

## Non-Ministerial Department – Scottish Housing Regulator

**Where were you?** Corporate parenting was not a concept we had any exposure to or awareness of prior to the legislation.

**Where are you now?** We have been on a learning curve in terms of unpicking the legislative duties and seeking to understand its direct relevance to us in the context of our relatively narrow statutory role. To help us understand this we spent considerable time engaging with CELCIS, Scottish Government policy colleagues and advocacy / support organisations, principally Who Cares Scotland. Care-experienced young people can be vulnerable and at risk of homelessness. We know that access to social housing and homelessness services are important issues for many care-experienced young people. Our work to monitor service quality, alongside our targeted, thematic work in areas such as homelessness shines a light on homeless and tenancy services that are important to care experienced young people.

**Where are you going?** Our corporate parenting plan sets out our approach but in 2017/18 we are engaging with 18 local authorities on homelessness issues. We will continue to explore practical opportunities to contribute as a corporate parent in a way that fits with our primary regulatory role.

## Other significant national body - The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

**Where were you?** Corporate parenting was not a new concept to the Service due to involvement with local initiatives and partnerships for a number of years. The statutory duties were an opportunity to co-ordinate and build on previous work to establish a consistent approach across Scotland.

**Where are you now?** The Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA) process considers the impacts of policy or practice on care experienced individuals. The SFRS works with national corporate parenting partners to share best practice. This includes short videos highlighting the importance of collaboration in meeting the needs of care experienced children and young people, which were disseminated on Care Day 2018 and a summary leaflet, aimed at care experienced children and young people has been used to increase positive engagement with the Service.

**Where are you going?** Improve access to employment and development opportunities within the SFRS. Ambitions include apprenticeships, positive action measures, a formal role model/mentoring programme, work experience and “bring your child to work” day. Remain informed about national and local issues affecting young people in care and care-experienced. The SFRS Corporate Parenting intranet resource centre for all employees will be continually updated with new and relevant information to assist colleagues in implementing the Plan. More good practice examples will be shared. Review and improve the monitoring of education and engagement programmes with the purpose of improving access for children and young people in the care system and the care experienced.

## Post-16 education body - Fife College

**Where were you?** In 2015 the term ‘corporate parent’ was not well known or understood and the College Guidance team were the main corporate parents on staff. They made special effort to look out for care-experienced students and liaise with curriculum staff to support the students having difficulty. A Corporate Parent Action Group (CPAG) was created to raise awareness of our responsibilities. The Guidance Manager championed the cause along with the Vice-Principal Organisational Development to create a workable Plan and Student Contacts Group.

**Where are you now?** In 2015-16, the Guidance team organised a working group who produced a Fife College Corporate Parent Guide which was shared with all staff and external partners to encourage corporate parenting in the wider college. CPAG sends birthday cards and invitations to Christmas lunch to care-experienced students which have been well-received. The KEV Project, a think-tank group of diverse cross-college staff and external partners, organised a Pizza Night to hear the Kare-Experienced Voice. From this event, three recommendations were taken forward and two of the students volunteered to become members of CPAG.

**Where are you going?** More engagement with care experienced students through a dedicated KEV Group and College Care-Experienced App, making effective changes from their input. More comprehensive staff training on care experience. Continue development of an effective Network with external partners. Increased involvement of the Inclusion team for learning support and of the Employability team for care-experienced students' positive destinations and work placements. Ensure a robust data-management system is in place to record applications, achievement and retention. Improve independent assessment of corporate parent effectiveness.

## Public Body – Bòrd na Gàidhlig

**Where were you?** Recognised that corporate parenting duties aligned with a number of ambitions and priorities, including the National Gaelic Language Plan ambition that “Gaelic belongs to all of Scotland”, the general principle of equality and diversity in the Scottish Government National Care Standards and UNCRC. Young people in care have a right to be valued for their ethnic background, language, culture, faith and linguistic background.

**Where are you now?** Bòrd na Gàidhlig has invested significant effort in better understanding which of their projects already support care experienced children and young people. Current funding schemes incorporate a section asking if the project provides activities or opportunities for care experienced young people, and to provide information on the intended outcomes. Bòrd na Gàidhlig will use data collection to inform development of its Corporate Parenting actions and to build a picture of provision across language development work for care experienced young people.

**Where are you going?** Aiming to further engage organisations including Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA); Edinburgh City Council, Glasgow City Council, Argyll & Bute Council, Highland Council, and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to explore opportunities for collaboration and enhance the baseline of evidence-based knowledge to increase opportunities for care experienced young people and inform the future direction.

## Special NHS service - NHS Health Scotland

**Where were you?** In 2015, NHS Health Scotland was the first board to sign up to the national Corporate Parenting Pledge. Our Chair made a commitment that we would make every effort to listen to the voice of Scotland’s care-experienced young people, act so that Scotland would become a better place for them and unite with and around them. We pledged to do this by promoting the health and wellbeing of this group in all of our work, which we do by working with our partners. Who Cares? Scotland delivered training to our staff to help us better understand the lives and needs of care experienced young people. This, along with the leverage provided by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, was welcomed by Health Scotland to further promote better awareness of the lives and needs of this group internally and externally.

**Where are you now?** Last year, we revised our corporate strategy which is now called our Strategic Framework for Action: ‘A Fairer Healthier Scotland 2017-22’. This sets out our five strategic priorities for this period and children, young people and families are one of these priorities.

We have sought to promote the rights and health of these young people by assessing the needs of the looked after children and young people population in Scotland through monitoring of national data for this group, e.g. the publication of the Scottish Public Health Observatory- Children and Young People.

We have also produced and distributed knowledge-based resources, seeking to promote and influence knowledge into action with a wide range of partners. This will affect positive change for this group by influencing action at both fundamental and wider determinants of health such as promoting access to and opportunity for health services, quality housing, leisure facilities, good learning and work, safety in the community and in the home, e.g. Health-Promoting Care: A toolkit for improving the health of looked after children.

**Where are you going?** Although our corporate parenting duties are implicit within our strategic vision, we have chosen to focus on four main areas to ensure this work is integrated within everything we do. This includes:

- Our core function and some specific deliverables to refresh the evidence for this population group and produce an updated profile which our partners can use to better understand what action may be required.
- Practice Improvement - to continuously improve how and what we do for care experienced young people by using Health Scotland's HIA approach to assess any potential impacts our work may have, to advance equality of opportunity and promote their interests where we can.
- Workforce development - we will develop the knowledge and awareness of our workforce of the needs of care experienced young people. This includes staying well informed of the best and most recent evidence, information and developments for staff to access so they can use it to influence others in their work and advocate for positive change.
- Our workforce policies - one example includes consideration of the needs of our staff who may have a caring role so we can better support them.

### Training and Support offered to Corporate Parents

Since before Part 9 came into force in April 2015 our partner organisations have been on hand to support all Corporate Parents. This enabled staff in different organisations with different statutory roles to learn about the specific responsibilities and how they relate to their organisation.

This hands-on approach was tailored to best meet the differing needs within such a broad range of organisations; all of whom have varying degrees of contact with care experienced children and young people. Importantly, it also reflects the ambition, underpinning Part 9 of the 2014 Act, to draw us all together as Corporate Parents to do more and do it better.

The Scottish Government provided funding support to develop advice and resources on corporate parenting. These are available from Who Cares? Scotland on the Corporate Parenting Learning Hub and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS) Corporate Parenting website.

Training and support provided by Who Cares? Scotland<sup>22</sup> has centred on bespoke learning for organisations at different stages of understanding corporate parenting responsibilities. This incorporated real life experiences of those with experience of care to ensure relevant and impactful engagement. Training was delivered as live face to face staff sessions, available as online digital resources and as feedback to those preparing and reviewing corporate parenting plans.

Support from CELCIS<sup>23</sup> reflects their expertise in implementation and their developing understanding of the evolving needs of organisations as they honed their practical approach to embedding corporate parenting responsibilities on an organisation-wide basis. CELCIS also developed the statutory guidance on Part 9 and worked collaboratively with Corporate Parents to develop a series of Practice Implementation Notes.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.corporateparenting.org.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/spotlight/implementing-corporate-parenting-duties/>



Who Cares? Scotland and CELCIS have observed a number of conditions must exist to successfully embed these messages. These can be summarised into themes, which very much reflect the feedback from Corporate Parents themselves: support and understanding at senior levels within organisations is essential, commitment to co-design, collaboration and shared learning between organisations immeasurably enhances the extent to which organisations can best meet the duties, and building on the organisations' unique potential as Corporate Parents to meaningfully engage with their relevant population of care experienced young people will maximise the impact they make.

Reflections from both organisations recognise that progress has been made. Corporate Parents are now better placed to understand the needs, circumstances and strengths of our looked after children and care leavers but there are a number of partially unmet challenges in providing opportunities to identify those with care experience.

In addition there have been a number of other organisations, such as those included below, who work with and/or fund organisations that contribute to our overall vision of a Scotland where all care experienced young people are empowered to fulfill their potential.

In supporting Corporate Parents they may provide funding or offer practice-based advice and discussions, to gather information and encourage dialogue between service providers and care experienced young people. These opportunities help fill any gaps where young people or those working in the care sector have been unable to discuss any number of issues from mental health to housing, health, education, employment or managing money. In the case of funding provision, they also support those seeking support to identify solutions.

<b>Life Changes Trust</b>	
Fund organisations and groups to give young people with care experience a voice so they can influence change. Funding has directly supported the creation of Champion Boards.	<a href="https://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/care-experienced-young-people">https://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/care-experienced-young-people</a>
<b>The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant</b>	
Supports Corporate Parents to deliver change in action and practice to bring improvement and consistency to the care of young people.	<a href="https://www.scottishcareleaverscovenant.org/">https://www.scottishcareleaverscovenant.org/</a>
<b>Staf (formerly the Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum)</b>	
Through the 'Connecting Voices' campaign children and young people have been invited to meet their corporate parents. Current training and consultancy has a corporate parenting focus.	<a href="https://www.staf.scot/">https://www.staf.scot/</a>
<b>Scottish Funding Council</b>	
Have set a national ambition for care experienced students across the college and university sector. Working to improve national data on care experienced students in the college and university sectors. A Care Experienced Governance group holds them, colleges and universities to account with regard to the duties.	<a href="http://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/access-priorities/care-experience/care-experience.aspx">http://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/access-priorities/care-experience/care-experience.aspx</a>
<b>Centre for Youth Criminal Justice</b>	
Have supported Corporate Parents to understand youth justice practice, policy and research in Scotland, to inform the development of their Plans.	<a href="http://www.cycj.org.uk/">http://www.cycj.org.uk/</a>

Shetland Islands Council  
Dumfries and Galloway College  
Glasgow Clyde College  
West Lothian Council  
Orkney College

Dumfries Islands Council  
West Lothian Council  
University of Stirling  
South Ayrshire Council  
Highland Council  
South Ayrshire Council  
University of Stirling  
University of Glasgow  
Perth & Kinross Council

Royal Government of Scotland  
West College Scotland  
Perth & Kinross Council  
The North Highland College  
City of Glasgow College

West Highland College  
Skills Development Scotland  
North Ayrshire Council

Robert Gordon University  
NHS Health Scotland  
NHS Forth Valley  
Fife Council  
The Highland Council  
NHS Western Isles  
Stirling Council  
Borders College  
The Scottish Ministers  
NHS Aberdeen City College  
NHS Education for Scotland  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Accountants in Bankruptcy  
NHS Ayrshire and Arran  
Transport Scotland  
Perth College UHI

East Ayrshire Council  
Queen Margaret University  
University of Stirling  
University of Aberdeen  
University of Strathclyde  
East Dunbartonshire Council  
NHS Dumfries and Galloway  
Children's Hearings Scotland  
NHS Borders  
Angus Council  
NHS Ayrshire and Arran  
NHS Forth Valley  
NHS Lanarkshire  
NHS National Waiting Times Centre  
Dumfries & Galloway Council  
Awards Agency for Scotland  
Greater Glasgow and Clyde  
Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland  
Disclosure Scotland  
East Lothian Council  
Argyll College UHI  
NHS Fife

Edinburgh City Council  
NHS Shetland  
Scottish Public Pensions Agency  
West Dunbartonshire Council  
Healthcare Improvement Scotland  
The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
The Scottish Prison Service  
North Lanarkshire Council  
The Chief Constable of the Police Service for Scotland  
Falkirk Council  
NHS Fife

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