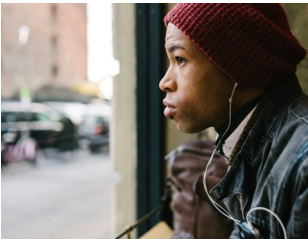


Winter 2016 update

News from the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant Alliance group

What are you doing?



We want to hear if you have positive practice examples which you can share with us.

We're keen to share good practice and disseminate information.

Facts & figures

The Scottish Care Leavers Covenant in numbers



What is the Covenant?

It's just over a year since we launched the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant, although the work of the Alliance group to get to that point had been going on for some time before that.

The aim of the Covenant is clear – we want to give care leavers the bright and better future they deserve. And, the Covenant is a bold step to make the changes needed to do that.

Care leavers often struggle on their journey into adulthood and for many, the leap from care to independence is just too great for them. Moving on from care too early, too abruptly and too often without the safety nets of support which most of us take for granted is a serious issue.

The Covenant's agenda for change sets out some of the changes that need to happen to make sure care leavers get the help and support they need.



The story so far

The list of almost 500 signups to endorse the principles of the Covenant is encouraging and ranges from local authorities, colleges and universities, independent and third sector care providers, MPs and MSPs, and individual practitioners, representing pretty much the whole range of corporate parenting bodies.

We know of local authorities who having signed up, and signed up and through a process of coproduction and listening to the voices of their young people, have begun to identify key practice changes to improve young people's experiences of care.

But, its very early days and we know that signing up is only the start - we need to see the promise turned into action. The Agenda for Change offers a clear framework on which we can build better futures for care leavers. The Covenant offers a new way of working and despite the ongoing budgetary challenges within local authorities, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Our challenge is turning intentions into actions, and making sure the Covenant and Agenda for Change are applied meaningfully and consistently for every looked after young person and care leaver. We know the challenges Corporate Parents face and the Covenant is designed to support them.

The Covenant and Agenda for Change are now starting to be incorporated into and referenced in local corporate parenting plans.

Who has signed up?

Implementation workshops

In February 2016, CELCIS hosted a series of 'Implementation workshops' designed to support bringing the Agenda for Change to life.

We hope to hold as range of follow-up sessions in 2017 to offer further support and chart progress.

These workshops were led by the national implementation advisor Melissa Van Dyke and looked to address the practical opportunities of implementing the guidance.

To take part in a follow up sessions, email us at info@scottishcareleaverscovenant.org

We've also supported organisations at a local level, to help develop corporate parenting plans and approaches which include the guiding principles.

Creating a 'new norm' for care leavers needs sustained effort. There's no simple answer.

We've made a solid start and we're optimistic, but we need to work collectively to make lasting improvements in how we support our young people and care leavers.



A whopping 475 individuals and organisations have signed the Covenant so far, and agree that Scottish care leavers deserve a better deal, with improved consistency of approach and entitlement across the country.

With this public declaration of support the Alliance can now work with Corporate Parents to make sure that care leavers all receive the same type of support regardless of where they stay.

International interest

The Covenant is getting noticed for its radical thinking and collaborative approach. We've had interest from across the UK, from the Department of Education in England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Canada, Slovakia and Australia.

We've presented our vision at conferences across the globe and while there are many challenges and much hard work ahead for us, our innovative thinking and bold approach is being looked upon with admiration.

Towards a better future for our young people

As the Covenant rolls out and promotes change, the Alliance Group still meets regularly. We're evolving to meet needs and we're reviewing how we chart progress, capture evidence, share practice and provide practical support to Corporate Parents at all levels.

What we've been doing

- Developing our national campaigning and awareness raising activity around the principles of Staying Put and Continuing Care
- Highlighting the importance of relationship-based practice and aftercare support for care leavers into adulthood
- Coordinating activity around promotion, profiling and implementation
- Sharing practice examples and supporting others to highlight change
- Identifying and addressing national barriers to change, and identifying local barriers which are experienced nationally
- Development of a Youth and Criminal Justice Identification protocol: led by CYCJ and CELCIS and in partnership with Police Scotland and SPS. The identification protocol will help care leavers involved with the justice system to positively identify themselves. A briefing paper was drafted and an implementation workshop held by CYCJ and CELCIS in November 2016.

What we have planned

- Ongoing work by Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland and Who Cares? Scotland to develop information and awareness raising materials for workers and young people about their new rights and entitlements under the 2014 Act
- Direct support to local authorities to support corporate parenting planning and ensure the Covenant and Agenda for Change are integrated into local plans
- Staf and CELCIS engaging with national regulatory bodies to address specific implementation issues, working to provide clear messaging and to address structural barriers to implementation
- Life Changes Trust will make sure funding opportunities to support the development of Champs Boards are linked to clear expectations
- Follow up with local authorities and other Corporate Parents with a focus on evaluating impact of activities following corporate sign up: Guided by questions such as:
 - ⇒ What does the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant look like in your authority?
 - ⇒ What has been your learning in relation to the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant?
 - ⇒ What's getting in the way of you being able to put the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant into practice?
 - ⇒ What support do you need to implement the 2014 Act, the principles of the Covenant and the Agenda for Change
 - ⇒ Ongoing work with the Scottish Prison Service and Police Scotland on the identification of care leavers in the justice system

Useful resources



If you want to learn more about Scotland's care leavers and the Covenant, have a look at some of these resources:

[Agenda for change](#)

[Scottish Care Leavers Covenant and summary](#)

[Identification of looked after young people and care leavers by justice agencies](#)

[Scottish Care Leavers Covenant Website](#)

[Inform: Children and Young People Act \(Part 9\)](#)

[Inform: Children and Young People Act \(Part 10 and Part 11\)](#)

[Staying Put Scotland](#)

[National Study: Throughcare & Aftercare in Scotland's Local Authorities \(CELCIS 2014\)](#)

[Throughcare and aftercare whole systems process flowchart](#)

[CELCIS throughcare and aftercare web page](#)

[Sweet 16?](#)

Contact us

Tel: 0141 444 8547



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For further information on the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant, and the work of the Alliance, please contact: info@scottishcareleaverscovenant.org

You told us what you think

The Alliance group carried out a small-scale survey on behalf of the Covenant Alliance group to find out what areas of the covenant were the most relevant, whether it's useful and why, and to begin collecting examples of how it's being used. A questionnaire was sent to everyone who had signed up to the covenant.

The results

Overall, participants indicated that the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant and the Agenda for Change were useful or very useful to them. Specific strengths highlighted were:

- it provides clarity and guidance to what good practice in throughcare and aftercare looks like and actions which can be measured and evaluated
- it lays out responsibilities for Corporate Parents and can be used in their planning
- it gives focus to improving opportunities and outcomes for care leavers
- it can be used as leverage for young people's voices to be heard and for challenging politicians

Raising awareness

Examples of how existing covenant members were raising awareness of the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant included:

- raising it at team meetings and individual supervision, staff training and development days
- through senior managers and chief executives
- circulation through organisational newsletters, bulletins and websites
- through Champions Boards

How can we support you?

Raising awareness of the Covenant would support its use and buy-in:

- there was a need for a broader public campaign to raise awareness of the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant
- the Alliance group should be targeting Chief Executives and senior managers to sign up
- there was a need for focused attention of providing implementation support to Corporate Parents
- young people should be involved in the ongoing development of the Covenant
- there is a need to identify those who are not already in support of what the SCLC encompasses

There is a recognised role for the alliance group to support members of the covenant in raising awareness and understanding and its alignment with the new legislation around Staying Put and Continuing Care. This will be a key focus of the Alliance group over the coming year. CELCIS will continue to work with Scottish Government and other national partners to identify national barriers to improving outcomes for care leavers and supporting practice within local authorities through the care-proofing of policy.

The Alliance Group

Led by the throughcare and aftercare team at CELCIS, the Covenant Alliance group is made up of key national agencies including Life Changes Trust, Who Cares? Scotland, Staf, Barnardos, Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice, IRISS, and Quarriers. Drawing on the support and expert contribution of over 30 other national and local organisations the Covenant's Agenda for Change sets out some of the key changes that are needed to ensure that care leavers get the support they need.

