

WHO CARES? SCOTLAND PROMISING PRACTICE

HIGHLIGHTING POSITIVE CORPORATE PARENTING PRACTICE NATIONALLY



INTRODUCTION

Over the past 12 months, the Corporate Parenting Training and Education team at Who Cares? Scotland have trained, supported and worked with a wide range of corporate parents. While we are still in the early stages of this exciting new chapter in Scotland's relationship with care experienced young people, there are already lots of good examples of corporate parenting in practice. To help highlight just some of those examples, we put together this round up of promising practice featuring the following corporate parents:

- Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- Fife College
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Qualifications Authority
- The University of St Andrews
- The Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership
- Skills Development Scotland
- The City of Glasgow College
- Ayrshire College

This round-up is only a small snapshot of the activity that is taking place across Scotland and only relates to corporate parents we have worked with closely. If you are a corporate parent and have an example of promising practice you would like to share, please get in touch as we hope to develop the round-up in the future and collect even more examples of good corporate parenting. Our ambition is that other corporate parents will build on these examples, so that this early promise can be realised and, together, corporate parents can make sure all care experienced young people feel in control of their lives and able to overcome the barriers they face.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig

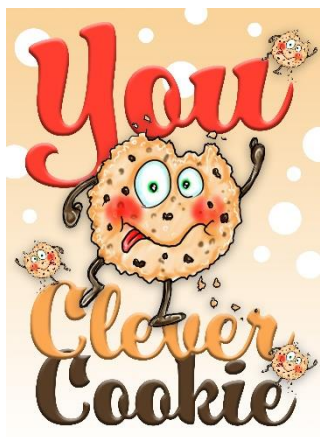
There is a responsibility on Bòrd na Gàidhlig to not only make organisations we fund aware of the statutory requirements of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, but also to enter into dialogue on how these organisations can help us be a good corporate parent. To raise awareness and encourage wider buy-in to the principles of Corporate Parenting, an information day was held at Great Glen House in Inverness on Monday 12th June 2017. The practical session was led by David Faith and Gavin Morgan from *Who Cares? Scotland*, who gave an overview of the requirements of legislation and led a lively discussion on how the organisations we fund could engage with and provide opportunities for looked after children and young people (LACYP) and care leavers. The group were very moved when Mary Capp shared with us her personal experiences of being a young person in care.

Head of Corporate Services, Alasdair MacKinnon, said:

“ Bòrd na Gàidhlig now has a responsibility to set out how we will carry out our corporate parenting duties and functions. Over the coming year, within our processes, we will seek to enhance the profile of LACYP and care leavers. We want to get a better understanding of funded projects which are already working with children and young people and look at how they can provide activities designed to promote the wellbeing of LACYP and Care Leavers. The information day held in June with organisations we fund to do work with young people was an important first step for us and the feedback from those attending has been tremendous.

Fife College

Fife College is committed to ensuring that its care experienced students feel supported throughout their time at college. All staff are aware of their corporate parenting responsibilities to our students and recognise that their support and guidance is key to ensuring the success of our students, not only during the time that they study with us at college but also into their futures.



One of the many ways that we support our care experienced students is to celebrate important milestones with them. We do this by sending greetings cards marking a range of important celebrations including birthdays, passing exams and moving house.

The cards that are used were created following a college-wide student design competition, reinforcing that not only do our staff have a responsibility to support our care experienced students, but fellow students also care and want to show their support.

Vice-Principal Carol Scott, who leads on corporate parenting at Fife College and sits on the Fife Regional Corporate Parenting Board, said:



I was delighted with the entries we received for the card competition. To see the effort that was put in from students to help celebrate important milestones for our care experienced students was fantastic. We hope that projects such as this compliments our other activities for our care experienced students, ensuring that they feel supported throughout their time with us.

We realise we need to keep improving however, so have also launched the Kare-Experienced Voice (KEV) Project. KEV started as a project led by Gail Burton from the College's Guidance team who encouraged colleagues from departments across the College to volunteer and play a part. The team put out a call to care-experienced students to join the group for pizza and also to share their experiences at the College and their ideas for how we can continue to support care-experienced students.



A lot of what the students had to say was reassuring, proving that we are on the right track and making great progress to become a better corporate parent. The students also came up with innovative new ideas such as 'buddy lunch tables' which is designed to offer peer support. The best commendation for the project was that the students want to continue to have regular meetings next session and the College's corporate parenting action group will be making sure that this happens. Crucially, we now have students volunteering to be part of our action group, directly informing the next stage of our development as a corporate parent.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to assess the impact of applying a proposed new or revised policy or practice. This involves identifying potential impacts, both positive and negative, on the nine protected characteristics as named in the Equality Act 2010.

Although 'Care Experienced' is not a named protected characteristic in itself, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service include exploring impacts of policy or practice on care experienced individuals within our Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) process. It is discussed within the area of age through children and young people and also within caring responsibilities but it can fall into any category depending on the needs of the individual(s) concerned and the understanding that no-one really fits into only one characteristic.

To ensure that the needs of care experienced individuals are considered, this approach is highlighted within the EHRIA face-to-face training and incorporated into the EHRIA guidance and supporting materials that we provide.

Should further background information or evidence be required to complete the EHRIA effectively, our corporate parenting internal resource center is available and updated regularly. The online resource center includes relevant evidence, statistics and reports, on-line

training and signposts and links to external experts such as Who Cares? Scotland, CELCIS and other Corporate Parents.

Chair of Board, Pat Watters and Chief Officer, Alasdair Hay, said:

“ We know that looked after children and care-experienced young people are amongst the most vulnerable in our society, and that all too often their life chances are restricted. The SFRS believes that corporate parenting is not just a responsibility. It is a real opportunity to help improve the futures of looked after children and young people. We are committed to the vision of a Scotland where all children and young people with experience of care are understood, believed in, and given every opportunity to thrive.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

One of the ways SQA delivers on its duty to promote the interests of care experienced young people in a creative and positive way, is with an annual event that brings together care experienced young people from across Scotland to celebrate their achievements on Results Day.



On 8 August, 140,000 young people received their results for the National Qualifications, courses and awards that they completed over the previous academic year. For many of those it was day of nervous anticipation, followed by celebrations or in some cases commiserations with friends and family. But for many care-experienced young people, Results Day can be a difficult time, spent alone without the support of loved-ones.

In an effort to help provide some of that support, SQA in conjunction with Who Cares? Scotland hosted a celebration to congratulate a group of care-experienced young people on their results.

The event, held at the Hilton Hotel in Glasgow, saw John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, pay a visit to the candidates and hear first-hand about their experiences working toward their qualifications. Also in attendance were members of the SQA Board of Management, and the team from Who Cares? Scotland.

SQA Chief Executive, Dr Janet Brown, says:

“ Our Results Day celebration events remind us that our work enables young people to seize their ambitions. SQA qualifications provide a

variety of routes to success, but it is the drive and commitment of our candidates, no matter their background, that delivers their goals. We are wholly committed to Who Cares? Scotland and I can vouch for our whole team when I say we are proud of the work we do in being a Corporate Parent.

SQA is looking forward to celebrating with another group of care experienced young people, in August 2018.

The University of St Andrews



The University of St Andrews has a wide range of access programmes, supporting pupils in school between the ages of 10 – 18 years old, as well as mature students and adult learners. Working closely with partner schools and the local authority, we are able to advertise and bring a large percentage of the care experienced cohort from our local area onto these programmes which are aimed at raising both attainment and aspirations, therefore reducing barriers to education.

A primary example of our attempts to make these programmes more accessible to care experienced young people is the flexible structure we have created within the First Chances Project for these pupils. Whereas the typical First Chances programme is only available to pupils attending a First Chances school, and pupils must meet certain continuation criteria from year to year, we

will offer the opportunity to any care experienced young person regardless of school, allow flexibility with continuation criteria (meaning pupils can drop in and out of the programme due to personal circumstances – e.g. ill health, movement in placement etc.) and provide transport to allow pupils to attend these events. We also provide additional skills and academic workshops to help build confidence and support pupils in smaller groups. All information on the First Chances Project and the flexible structure for care experienced young people can be found on our [website](#). Care experienced applicants to St Andrews can also find additional information about the support we offer on our [information for Care Leavers pages](#).

Ruairidh Cosgrove, participant on Academic Mentoring Project and Sutton Trust Summer School, now at Fife College studying Sound Engineering said:



The Academic Mentoring Project and Sutton Trust Summer School gave me confidence and help, especially throughout exam periods. They provided many opportunities to meet new people and learn new things!

Siobhan Redmonds, care experienced second year student at the University of St Andrews said:



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.

The Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership

The Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) approached Who Cares? Scotland for support in the development of an e-learning module which would be accessed by approximately **9,000 workers** within the partnership, working in various services including children and families, criminal justice, homelessness and adults and older people. The module is intended to support health and social care workers to better understand the corporate parenting role and duties as defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and to clarify the impact which good corporate parenting can have.



An example of a slide from the module, hosted on the HSCP's proprietary training platform.

The HSCP Corporate Parenting Steering Group, comprising representatives from social and health services worked collaboratively with a Corporate Parenting Officer from Who Cares? Scotland to develop the structure and content for the module. Initial discussions established that the training would be **mandatory** for all workers in the partnership and the length was set at between twenty and thirty minutes, though on the basis of the strength of the content developed, it was ultimately agreed to extend this to forty five

minutes and to include an assessment at the end. Every element of the module was discussed, reviewed and edited collaboratively – a process which ensured that the end product met everyone's expectations and was **fit for purpose** across all the services within the HSCP.

Discussions are already planned to established whether this model could be successfully implemented across neighbouring authorities in the Clyde Valley area and beyond.

Tony Mackie, Principal Officer for Learning and Development at Glasgow City Council said:



Each partner was able to offer insights into the range of work that happens with care experienced young people across the city, and the combination of that shared knowledge has led the group to produce a very informative, engaging and valuable module that will benefit all of our staff. This piece of work has been a highlight of recent times because, I think, it started from a shared desire to create something that would do justice to the principles of corporate parenting for our young people.

I think that the final product reflects the message we wanted it to deliver as well as the shared approach to its production.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland have chosen to introduce **all-staff** training on corporate parenting, involving bespoke materials developed in collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland and with additional training opportunities offered where appropriate. The training was launched in May 2017, made available through the Skills Development Scotland Online Training Academy. When the training was launched, staff were made



aware through the weekly newsletter. As part of the training, all staff were asked to watch videos created by Who Cares? Scotland and then take part in discussion exercises at team time sessions, structured around bespoke worksheets. These worksheets include three activities which support staff to better contextualise the outcomes and experiences of care experienced young people within the framework of their own experiences and approaches to practice using guided group discussion and mapping exercises. The training has been underway for the last three months. The videos have been especially well received and have generated meaningful discussion at the sessions, and afterwards when working with care experienced young people. One staff member said:

“ This module is extremely helpful for all SDS staff who will be working with young people who have had a care experience as well as colleagues who are designing/developing products and services to support this vulnerable group. Listening to young people’s experience is very insightful and I would recommend this module to all staff.

James Russell, SDS Acting Director of Operations said:

“ SDS is fully committed to delivering our responsibilities as a Corporate Parent and has a robust Corporate Parenting Action Plan that is agreed and monitored by our Board and Executive Leadership Group.

We are delighted to have developed and launched this learning unit for our colleagues, designed in collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland. It is part of a suite of continuous professional development activities that our staff undertake to ensure they maintain and develop their knowledge and competence to meet the diverse needs of our customers.

It is vitally important that we offer focused learning that supports our work with those who are care experienced. This ensures we can support the development of their career management skills and their move in to work, apprenticeships, training, further or higher education.

City of Glasgow College

Care experienced students can access additional funding via our Hardship Funds which are 'ring fenced' specifically for this group. They can apply for a bursary of up to £1,000 for the year which is in addition to the usual Bursary or Student Loan they may be entitled to and we ensure this is available at any time of year. Each application is assessed on an individual basis with a number of students being awarded funds to help with accommodation costs in addition to living costs. Our care experienced student advisor will meet with students to discuss their needs and give appropriate and relevant guidance about money and budgeting. In contrast to their non-care experienced peers, this group often don't have someone who can provide them with financial support for the extra expenses that may turn up for a student. By offering this funding we aim to remove financial barriers and ease any anxieties that our care experienced students may have over money.

Gillian Plunkett, Student Experience Director at the City of Glasgow College said:



At City of Glasgow College we have spent a lot of time reflecting on how experiencing care at a young age can affect an individual's life chances, we have revisited key milestone stages in the student journey to ensure that our care experienced students have the very best student experience and realise their full potential.

Money is an issue for most students, but for our care experienced students it can be a real struggle with limited or no family support, lack of role models and budgeting skills it is easy to get into a muddle over bills, food and accommodation costs. However, while some students can rely on the 'bank of mum and dad', care experienced young people may not have this support. At City of Glasgow College we 'ring fence' Hardship Funds to ensure that we can help with the cost of accommodation deposits and starter costs at the start of the year, and we ensure that throughout the year monies are available for those unexpected and unplanned eventualities.

However, this service is about more than doling out money, it also gives us the opportunity to engage in useful and practical conversations with young people who need our care and support and while we understand the College has a responsibility to do so, we also feel privileged to be able to help. Our care experienced students have told us that just knowing this support is there provides reassurance and helps to lessen the very real anxieties that care experienced students have in relation to money, their money skills and their overall well-being.

Ayrshire College



Ayrshire College is committed to being the best possible Corporate Parent. As such, on 17th February 2017 Ayrshire College hosted its first ever Corporate Parenting Networking event. The aim of the event was to create an opportunity for Corporate Parents to share practice and to look at how we could further develop the support we provide to care experienced young people across Ayrshire.

Over 50 partners attended the event including representatives from:

- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
- SQA
- Who Cares? Scotland
- Skills Development Scotland
- CELCIS
- University of West of Scotland
- East Ayrshire Council
- North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- South Ayrshire Council

The event began with short updates from CELCIS and each of the three Ayrshire local authorities and later in the morning Who Cares? Scotland also delivered a presentation. Joanne Logan, Police Scotland, described the presentations as “informative, thought provoking and interesting.”

Following the presentations, there was an opportunity for discussion and collaborative working as participants were asked to consider what they’d achieved so far in relation to the Corporate Parenting duties, and what commitments they could make as Corporate Parents moving forward. Some of the key commitments included:

- Better data sharing
- Developing new and existing partnerships
- Continuing to network and share practice

Since February, all partners who attended the event have continued to build on their commitments and as a result there have been a number of positive developments including:

- Ayrshire College representation on Corporate Parenting Steering Groups across the three local authority areas is now more effective, as our Corporate Parenting partners have a better understanding of our Corporate Parenting goals and the opportunities we can offer care experienced young people.
- The College and local authority partners organise care leavers' events on each campus, and as a result of the event in February, this will include the first ever event in Ayr Campus, as part of Care Leavers' Week.
- The College has further developed links with social work teams in each local authority area and joint tracking meetings are now taking place on a regular basis.
- Discussions have taken place about creating a joint forum for care experienced young people, linking work being carried out in South Ayrshire to create a Champion's Board with the Connect to Change group in East Ayrshire and the College's Student Association.

Overall, feedback from partners who attended the event was very positive. Lizzie Morton, Policy Associate, CELCIS summed up the event when she said that "the event is an example of good practice in terms of networking and developing collaboration." Jane O'Rorke, Senior Widening Participation Development Officer, UWS commented "I made many new contacts and will keep in touch with them to help improve the support at UWS for Care Leavers."

Helen Canning (Director of Student Services), who leads on Corporate Parenting at Ayrshire College said:



I was delighted that so many partners were able to join us at our networking event. It was great to hear about all the good work going on in Ayrshire and beyond to support and promote the interests of care experienced young people. The event generated lots of great ideas for all of us to take forward, which will further enhance our capabilities as corporate parents.