

## 5 Corporate Parenting and you

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# Introduction

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Every **Corporate Parent** has a legal duty to take actions to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of every looked after child and young person, and care leavers up to age 26.

These actions should promote the Care-Experienced person's physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development.

Although the legal duties below end at age 26, the A Blueprint for Fairness ([CoWA, 2016](#)) report recommended that institutions recognise the long-term impact on educational attainment and employment outcomes of those with care experience. Many colleges and universities have extended their support for Care-Experienced students beyond this age.

Under [section 58 of the 2014 Act](#), every Corporate Parent has six substantive duties. These duties are fairly general to allow for different interpretations, as there are [many different types of Corporate Parents](#) named in the legislation. The duties are to:

- be alert
- assess needs
- promote interests
- provide opportunities
- make sure services are easy to access
- look for ways to improve.

Every university must have a **Corporate Parenting Plan** outlining the actions they will take to meet the six duties. The activities in this section encourage you to explore your institution's plan.

Click on the diagram below to explore each of the **six duties**. Each segment will open into a new tab. To navigate back to this page, close the new tab and continue.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

[Corporate Parenting duties](#)

## Being alert

Corporate Parents must **be alert** to matters which might affect the wellbeing of Care-Experienced people. This means engaging in regular dialogue about issues which might have a negative impact for both individuals and Care-Experienced people as a whole, such as moving placement or residence, changes to benefit rules or a service being withdrawn.

In the video below, Jayde talks about the impact on her grades of not having accommodation outside term.

Video content is not available in this format.



### Activity 11

Your institution will have a Corporate Parenting action plan.

Find an example from your plan on how your institution **plans to be alert** and make notes on how your role could contribute to this.

*Provide your answer...*

## Assessing needs

Corporate Parents **need to assess the needs** of Care-Experienced people in line with the services they provide. This can include their individual needs and their collective needs.

Watch Megan talk about the support she's received at university.

Video content is not available in this format.



### Activity 12

Your institution will have a Corporate Parenting action plan.

Find an example from your plan on how your institution **plans to assess needs** and make notes on how your role could contribute to this.

*Provide your answer...*

## Promoting interests

Corporate Parents have a legal duty to **promote the interests** of Care-Experienced people. This means taking action which will pursue advantages or benefits for an individual, or the population as a whole, whether through advocacy, by widening access to education or employment opportunities, tackling discrimination or upholding rights.

In the video below, Jayde talks about being at a disadvantage as she didn't own a laptop while studying.

Video content is not available in this format.



### Activity 13

Your institution will have a Corporate Parenting action plan.

Find an example from your plan on how your institution **plans to promote interests** and make notes on how your role could contribute to this.

*Provide your answer...*

## Providing opportunities

Corporate Parents are required to provide a wide range of **high-quality opportunities** which improve (rather than just safeguard) the well-being of Care-Experienced people. The aim is to help people become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to their communities.

### Case study: Carol

“Just to see the change that someone’s believing in you, someone’s got your back, and they’re providing opportunities, they’re supporting you, they’re there to chat whenever you want, I think it makes a big, big difference, because a lot of Care-Experienced individuals will come to college or university or wherever they’re transitioning into next, and the relationships have broken down or the trust has broken down. And the trust can’t be built back up overnight.

I think once you build the relationships up with people and they’ve got a wee bit of confidence behind them, there’s no stopping them.”

### Activity 14

Your institution will have a Corporate Parenting action plan.

Find an example from your plan on how your institution **plans to provide opportunities** and make notes on how your role could contribute to this.

*Provide your answer...*

## Making sure Care-Experienced people can access opportunities, services and support

Care-experienced people often face barriers to participating in activities and engaging with services, including limited access to finance and transport, changes of residence, low levels of numeracy/literacy, unresolved trauma, fear of failure, loss or rejection and problems associated with negative coping strategies.

Corporate Parents must take action to overcome these barriers, ensuring that children and young people can meaningfully access the **opportunities** they make available and the services and support they provide. Part of this duty is making the eligible population informed of the opportunities available.

In the video below, Gary talks about the services that would have benefitted him at university if he had known they were available.

Video content is not available in this format.



### Activity 15

Your institution will have a Corporate Parenting action plan.

Find an example from your plan on how your institution plans to make sure Care-Experienced people can **access opportunities**, services and support and make notes on how your role could contribute to this.

*Provide your answer...*

## Taking actions to improve

Corporate Parents are required to keep their work with Care-Experienced people under review and to look for **ways to improve** how they fulfil their duties. At a strategic level, this means drafting a Corporate Parenting Plan. Plans must be regularly reviewed and progress reported to the Scottish Ministers. [Who Cares? Scotland](#) can provide training and support for institutions during this process.

### Activity 16

Your institution will have a Corporate Parenting action plan.

Find an example from your plan on how your institution **plans to take actions to improve** and make notes on how your role could contribute to this.

*Provide your answer...*

## Collaboration

Universities, like all Corporate Parents, also have a legal duty to collaborate with each other in order to best meet the needs of the Care-Experienced people for whom they are responsible.

In practice there are many forms of collaboration, both formal and informal, across the education sector, many of which date to before the legislation that made this a legal requirement.

### The Hub for Success

The Hub for Success is a partnership project between colleges, universities, third sector organisations and the local authority in Edinburgh. The project was launched in February 2019 to provide advice, support and encouragement to Care-Experienced people to get in, stay in and return to education. The Hub can provide information about learning opportunities to people with care experience.

It is embedded within social work at the City of Edinburgh council and receives many referrals through colleagues.

The Hub aims to explore how the partner institutions can work with local schools to improve outcomes and raise awareness of educational opportunities among Care-Experienced pupils.

Benefits of the collaboration include:

- shared funding for the service provided to Care-Experienced people in the region
- regular sharing of good practice
- a shared platform for Care-Experienced students to voice concerns and ideas
- a wider reach in terms of the individual referred to the service
- a wider reach in terms of staff who have received training and information about Corporate Parenting duties
- link-up between social work and education sectors allows staff to address complex problems more coherently.

The collaboration also allows the opportunity for strategic discussion of Corporate Parenting duties at many levels: an Advisory Board of Principals and other senior leadership, a Steering Group of student support practitioners, and a Learner Advisory Board of Care-Experienced students at each partner institution.

## Corporate Parenting in your institution

Every college and university has a **named contact** who is able to provide information on the support available to Care-Experienced students.

If a student discloses to you that they are Care-Experienced, it is useful to know who this person is.

**Make sure you know that person's name and contact information in case this happens.**

### Activity 17

Look back at the examples you've identified from your institution's Corporate Parenting Plan and choose one that particularly relates to your role.

What changes can you make to your practice to help make this happen?

*Provide your answer...*

## Estranged students and student carers

Many universities provide additional support to other student groups at risk of not achieving their full potential – those who are estranged and studying without family

support, and students with caring responsibilities. The support made available to these students may be similar to that in place for Care-Experienced students.

### **Estranged Students**

Estranged students are young people studying without the support of a family network, due to a breakdown in those relationships. Students in this position often have no contact at all with their family, or sporadic and conflicting contact. Causes of a breakdown of familial relationships could include (but are not limited to): emotional or physical abuse, mismatched expectations about family roles and relationships, or a clash of personality or values. Estranged students have no experience of being in care and do not have a corporate parent responsible for them.

For more information: [StandAlone](#)

### **Student Carers**

Student Carers are students who at any point of their studies provide *unpaid* emotional or practical support for a relative, friend or neighbour, who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without that support.

For more information: [Carers Trust Scotland](#)



### **Case study: University of Glasgow**

#### **Support for estranged students**

The University of Glasgow recognises that estranged students face many issues and barriers in their educational journey similar to those experienced by young people who have spent time in care, particularly in relation to finance, accommodation and mental health. At the point a young person usually becomes estranged from their family, aged 16-18, a local authority no longer has a legal responsibility to become involved in that young person's life. Although estranged students are not covered by Corporate Parenting legislation, the University extends them the same provision it has in place for its Care-Experienced students. This includes:

- participation in pre-entry programme and guaranteed adjusted offer of entry
- dedicated, ring-fenced financial support
- 365 days-per-year accommodation guarantee
- dedicated named points of contact, providing 1-2-1 support, guidance and advocacy, from application to graduation.

The University of Glasgow has signed the [StandAlone Pledge](#) for Estranged Students in 2016, and states explicitly within its [Corporate Parenting Plan](#) that it extends this support to estranged students, even where these young people have never been 'looked after' by a local authority.

For more information, visit the [University of Glasgow 'Support for estranged students'](#).

#### **Support for student carers**

Similarly, the University of Glasgow recognises that students with caring responsibilities can also face challenges in engaging with and successfully completing degree-level study. We understand how caring responsibilities can, for example, impact on student attendance, opportunities for part-time work and social interactions. **Student Carers** are also more likely to experience issues related to their mental health.

In 2019 the University of Glasgow was awarded the Carers' Trust **!Warning! Calibri not supported**[Going Higher for Student Carers](#) Recognition Award for the support it has in place for this student group. The University's provision for student carers includes:

- Participation in pre-entry programme and guaranteed adjusted offer of entry
- Student Carers Policy & bespoke Student Carers Plans
- Priority financial support
- Dedicated named points of contact within the University's Widening Participation team, providing 1-2-1 support, guidance and advocacy, from application to graduation.

For more information, visit [University of Glasgow 'Supporting student carers'](#).

## Corporate Parenting and you

This course is a step towards increased understanding of what Corporate Parenting means for you, your institution and other Corporate Parents. We hope you've gained some insight into the impact of care experience on the learner journey through the stories the students have shared.

Throughout the course, you've had opportunities to reflect on your own practice and how you can contribute to better outcomes for Care-Experienced students. You might find it useful to share and discuss these reflections with colleagues in different roles to help you gain a clearer understanding of your role in supporting Care-Experienced students throughout their journey into, through and out of your institution.

### Activity 18

This activity will help you reflect on what you have learned from the course, what that means for your practice, and what you intend to do as a result.

Try and identify one meaningful action you can take and pledge to do this within the next three months. Hold on to your reflection notes from the course to help inform your practice.

What?	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
So what?	<i>Provide your answer...</i>
Now what?	<i>Provide your answer...</i>



## Conclusion

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We hope you have enjoyed working through the course and are feeling more confident about engaging with Care-Experienced students. Everyone has a part to play as a Corporate Parent to ensure that Care-Experienced students have experiences and outcomes in higher education that are just as positive as any other student.

If you're interested, there are more resources to explore in the next section. You can also get in touch with your institution's named contact to find out more about what the university does to support Care-experienced Students and how you can get involved.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the module. If you would like to claim your digital badge and Statement of Participation, please complete the [End of course quiz](#).

# Acknowledgements

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This course was written and co-produced with Care-Experienced students, Who Cares? Scotland and the Open University in Scotland in collaboration with the following institutions and organisations:

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#### Text

268994: Scottish Funding Council care-experienced definition: Scottish Funding Council

### **Section 3**

#### Images

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#### Video

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269564: Risk of criminalisation – Charlie: Who Cares? Scotland

269566: Educational attainment – Lee: Who Cares? Scotland

269569: Housing and homelessness – Lee: Who Cares? Scotland

279386: Housing and homelessness – Jayde: Who Cares? Scotland

269570: Mental health and trauma – Megan: Who Cares? Scotland

269571: Access to University – Lee: Who Cares? Scotland

### **Section 4**

#### Images

268904: Graph 4: OU Scotland

#### Video

269581: Self-declaration – Lee: Who Cares? Scotland

269573: Self-declaration – Gary: Who Cares? Scotland

269575: Beyond graduation – Lynda: Who Cares? Scotland

269574: Beyond graduation – Gary: Who Cares? Scotland

#### Audio

278602: Beyond graduation: NHS

### **Section 5**

#### Images

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#### Video

269576: Being alert – Jayde: Who Cares? Scotland

269577: Assessing needs – Megan: Who Cares? Scotland

269578: Promoting interests – Jayde: Who Cares? Scotland

269579: Access opportunities, services and support – Gary: Who Cares? Scotland