

**Corporate Parenting in Higher Education   Corporate Parenting in Higher Education**

**5 Corporate Parenting and you**

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## Introduction

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](https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/)) 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**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/section/58), 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**](https://www.corporateparenting.org.uk/corporate-parenting/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.

Start of Media Content

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Corporate Parenting duties

[View description - Corporate Parenting duties](" \l "Session1_Description1)

End of Media Content

## 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Care-Experienced people as a whole, such as moving placement or residence, changes to benefit rules or a service being withdrawn.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.

Start of Media Content

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[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_Transcript1)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 11**

Start of Question

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.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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.

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[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_Transcript2)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 12**

Start of Question

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.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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.

Start of Media Content

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Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 13**

Start of Question

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.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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**

Start of Box

“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.”

End of Box

Start of Activity

**Activity 14**

Start of Question

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.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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.

Start of Media Content

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[View transcript - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_Transcript4)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

End of Media Content

Start of Activity

**Activity 15**

Start of Question

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.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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](https://www.corporateparenting.org.uk/training-options/about-our-training-options/) can provide training and support for institutions during this process.

Start of Activity

**Activity 16**

Start of Question

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.

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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.

Start of Box

**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.

End of Box

## 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.**

Start of Activity

**Activity 17**

Start of Question

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?

End of Question

*Provide your answer...*

End of Activity

## 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**](https://www.standalone.org.uk/)

**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**](https://carers.org/our-work-in-scotland/our-work-in-scotland%20)

Start of Figure



End of Figure

**Case study: University of Glasgow**

Start of Box

**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**](http://www.thestandalonepledge.org.uk/) for Estranged Students in 2016, and states explicitly within its [**Corporate Parenting Plan**](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_550726_smxx.pdf) 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’](https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/wp/estranged/).

**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 [**Going Higher for Student Carers**](https://carers.org/college-and-university-work-in-scotland/going-higher-for-student-carers-recognition-award) 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’](https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/wp/studentcarers).

End of Box

## 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.

Start of Activity

**Activity 18**

Start of Question

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.

Start of Table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What?** | *Provide your answer...* |
| **So what?** | *Provide your answer...* |
| **Now what?** | *Provide your answer...* |

End of Table

End of Question

End of Activity

## Conclusion

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](http://www.open.edu/openlearnworks/mod/oucontent/olinkremote.php?website=Corporate%20Parenting%20in%20Higher%20Education&targetdoc=Corporate%20Parenting%20quiz).

## Acknowledgements

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We are particularly grateful to the many Care-Experienced students who have shared their stories as videos and case studies – Carol, Charlie, Dionne, Gary, Jayde, Jenna, Lee, Lynda and Megan. Their participation really brought the course to life.

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**Section 1**

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**Section 2**

Images

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Text

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

**Section 3**

Images

268938: Homelessness: Photo by Eric Ward on Unsplash

268902: Graph 3: CELCIS (2019) Homelessness and care experience. Beyond the headlines. Beyond the Headlines by CELCIS is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

268942: Studying at college: Photo by Tim Gouw on Unsplash

Video

269563: Risk of criminalisation – Dionne: Who Cares? Scotland

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

279544: University of Glasgow logo: University of Glasgow

Hexagon image (and course banner): Dr Gregor Clunie, Who Cares? Scotland. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Licence https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

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

# Corporate Parenting duties

## Description

This is an image illustrating the duties of a Corporate Parent. They include : Alert, Assess, Promote, Opportunities, Access and Improve.

[Back to - Corporate Parenting duties](" \l "Session1_MediaContent1)

# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

As a Masters student, the course really is a full year, it’s September to September. But if you’re an undergrad, your degree usually finishes in the May/June time, and it was at that point, I received a notice to quit halls. There was no option to extend that or to stay on. There was no follow-up to make sure you did have a place to go. It was just like “you need to be out by the 1st of June and hand your keys back.” So, I found it really, really difficult between the 1st of June and the 4th of September to complete that Masters because I was kind of in a limbo stage of not really having anywhere, and I felt like nobody really understood, and it reflected on my grades. I’ve never, ever failed anything in my life until this point, and I don’t think it’s a coincidence that that’s the point of my life where my grades slip. Because if you look at the start of the year when I was stable, I was getting distinction grades, and I think that it’s not really fair, if that makes sense. Like I am capable of those distinction grades, but circumstances meant that that uni wasn’t my first priority.

[Back to - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_MediaContent2)

# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

I’ve changed my course a couple of times and the uni have been really supportive with it, because I applied to do medicine, and then I changed to maths, and then I realised that that didn’t reflect what I was doing in my work either, so now I’m doing social and public policy with quantitative methods, so I’m still a wee bit of a geek. And that’s going really well. I’m really enjoying my course. I think what really helps and has made university much easier for me is all of the relationships I have around me, so I’m still in touch with my teachers from school, the Care Leaver Coordinator is great, he emails me a lot, he’s organised lunches for care experienced students to come together so that you don’t feel like you’re the only one there at university. I’m able to be quite open with my flatmates and some friends that I have on the course, and that relationships have made it a lot easier to not feel ashamed and internalising the stigma as well, that I feel like I might face at university.

[Back to - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_MediaContent3)

# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

I was renting out a laptop. So, she managed you could rent laptops in the uni but it was usually only for a day or a week. But she said “have that until I can get something sorted for you”, and she managed to get a grant so that I could buy my own first laptop. I think I had a really poignant moment in fourth year, I was in a research class and it was for my final dissertation, and it was a lecturer that asked about using Excel, and I’d never used Excel at this point in my life and I’d never had a computer of my own. And she said about how we had to all do this work at home, and I said “I actually can’t, because I don’t have the technology”, and she kind of called me out in front of the whole class, and I think that’s when I really realised I am really different, that I stood out. And I got my first laptop. So, to think that I’d done three years of uni and not had my own computer, and I finally got it, and I just felt like it was a new start, and I was able to be on par with everyone else.

[Back to - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_MediaContent4)

# Uncaptioned interactive content

## Transcript

I think anyone that’s care experienced should have a point of contact and maybe I’ve heard about this 365 days a year, it didn’t exist in my case, but there’s supposed to be this 365 days a year accommodation. I came from a council house, I gave up my council house. I would say 95% of university students have a home to go back to, whereas I am in this small… I would love to know what the actual statistic is, but I’m in this small 5% bracket or whatever that I didn’t have anywhere to go back to, really. That would have really benefitted me if I knew straight from the bat you can have 365 days a year accommodation from the university themselves. That would cover my biggest problems throughout university. I think it is a simple solution to quite a big problem, just getting two members of staff or even a student that’s went through it, someone like myself. I know I’m wanting to go into the finance world, but getting someone that does that. There are a few care experienced people out there, and is a low number that make it to university, but maybe even once you get one person in place, you’ll eventually work out other ones that could come through, and maybe even making it a student thing, involving students on a voluntary… I would have done it on a voluntary basis. Like three or four hours a week, just pair me up with someone.

[Back to - Uncaptioned interactive content](" \l "Session1_MediaContent5)