

Scottish Association for Marine Science

Corporate Parent Plan

2017/2018



Introduction

The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) is Scotland's largest and oldest independent marine science organisation, delivering marine science for a productive and sustainably managed marine environment through innovative research, education and engagement with society.

Based near Oban on the Scottish west coast, SAMS' marine research and teaching portfolio is diverse in topic and discipline, global in outlook and relevance, and delivered in partnership with academic, business, government, regulatory, voluntary and civic society colleagues. SAMS is a charitable organisation (009206) with a membership that elects the governing Council and is an academic partner in the University of the Highlands and Islands. In terms of education activities, SAMS also has partnerships with St Andrews, University of Strathclyde, University of Nante and University of Crete.

Corporate Parenting

The definition of corporate parenting is "An organisation's performance of actions necessary to uphold the rights and safeguard the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, and through which physical, emotional, spiritual, social and educational development is promoted." Definition from Statutory Guidance on Corporate Parenting (2015), p.7

Corporate Parenting Responsibilities

SAMS –UHI is identified as a corporate parent under Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

As a Corporate Parent we will support every care leaver who is under the age of 26 and who was looked after by a local authority on their 16th birthday or at any subsequent time.

SAMS are committed to ensuring care experienced young people are fully supported during their academic journey, to enable them to successfully complete their course and undergo a worthwhile experience throughout their student journey. This support also extends past graduation with further assistance offered, for a fixed period, to enhance their career development and ambitions.

At SAMS, we know that we will need to recognise and acknowledge the vulnerability of care leavers. Ensure that all care leavers are equally entitled to support services such as including discretionary funds, learning support, support with accommodation options and equal access to cultural and recreational opportunities.

Care leavers as with any student should be encouraged, enabled and empowered especially with transitions into and out of learning and into employment.

It is our duty as a Corporate Parent to:

- Be alert to issues, which might adversely affect the wellbeing of the care-experienced learner.
- Assess the needs of care-experienced learners for services and support provided.
- Promote the interests of those care-experienced learners and provide opportunities and activities designed to promote their wellbeing.
- Take action and support care experienced learners to access opportunities, make use of services and receive support.
- Take action to improve and review our performance as a corporate parent

At present, many looked after children and care leavers experience some of the poorest personal outcomes of any group in Scotland. Low levels of educational engagement and achievement feed into high levels of poverty, homelessness and poor mental health. Barriers to education which care experienced young people face include lack of funding, disrupted schooling, an unstable home environment, and accessing further and higher education at a later age than their non-looked after peers

The university are committed to ensuring care experienced young people are fully supported during their time with us, to enable them to successfully complete their course and undergo a worthwhile experience throughout their student journey. This support also extends past graduation with further assistance offered, for a fixed period, to enhance their career development and ambitions.

In addition to supporting care experienced students, the university will also ensure staff across the partnership are provided with training opportunities and materials which will both raise awareness of the difficulties these students may face, and enable them to provide direct practical support.

To achieve our objectives, the university will continue to work closely with relevant external agencies as well as our academic partners

The university plan specifically focuses on collaborative work across the partnership and the coordination of actions which will encourage care experienced young people to apply to the university and enhance the support available to them as our students. Each college and research institution will also have its own individual Corporate Parenting Plan, reflecting its distinctive, local context, working in junction with the overarching university plan.

The university and locally specific plans will therefore form the totality of the partnership's approach to meeting the duties, and as part of this the university will be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of care experienced young people.

SAMS-UHI Corporate Parenting Action Plan

| Strategic Plan and Purpose | Actions | Owner | Desired Outcomes |
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| Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS- UHI) aims to provide and continually improve services for care experienced learners through the implementation of a Corporate Parenting Plan (CPP). This will involve regularly reviewing the learning process within SAMS-UHI and aiming to give quality support to each student. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a corporate parenting team to implement all areas of CPP. 2. Liaise with other academic partners and UHI to maintain congruence in matters of policy and procedure. 3. Include opinion and input of care leavers/givers in aspects of the learner journey to raise awareness for the student and staff community. | Programme Team and Student Support Officer. | CPP delivered and procedure and policy developed as required. |
| Awareness training made available to all appropriate SAMS staff in relation to CPP. Participate in UHI wider working group for care leavers. | Highlight concerns and raise awareness at management level. | Programme Team, Student Support Officer | Increased staff awareness of challenges facing care leavers/givers. Aim to improve as a corporate parent. |
| Ensure comprehensive information and advice is available to care leavers at early stage. | Care leavers invited to meet staff, tour facilities. | Programme Team, Admissions Team, Student Support Officer, | Further develop optimum level of support and awareness provided to care leavers. |
| | Ensure wording on web-site is user-friendly, encouraging and always up to date. | SAMS Communications Team | As Above |
| Aim for early identification of care leavers/givers during application | Students who declare care experience at application are flagged up. | Programme Team, Admissions Team, Student Support Officer | Accurate recording of care experience status of applicants, resulting in more students accessing dedicated support. |

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| Establish support connections (including finance) with students who are care experienced learners at pre-entry stage - within 3 weeks of application | Personal contact within two weeks of acceptance to offer welcome and support. | Admissions Team, Student Support Officer | Support given. Trusting relationships formed. Better preparation for students. Improve retention and attainment. |
| Provide timely information regarding funding | Support offered for completion of application/discretionary funding and SAAS | HOSS, Student Support Officer | Care experienced students are aware of services and funding available. |
| Ensure care leavers and givers have access to appropriate accommodation | Information given regarding SAMS accommodation and local recommended landlords in the Oban area. | Admissions Team, Accommodation Officer | Processes help to ensure smooth transition and settling into student life. |
| Create a co-ordinated student journey record with all care-experienced students. This would be in addition to a Personal Learning Support Plan, which is available to all students at any time of the academic year if applicable. | Establish support and implement plans for each student. Ensure all care experienced student have a PLSP adequate to their needs, review this as required. | Student Support Officer | Comprehensive support given and agreed with care leaver and shared with relevant staff. |
| Provide academic support for care experienced students where necessary, ensuring care experienced students are signposted at pre-entry stage | Timely intervention and encouragement if attendance and progress is a cause for concern | Relevant Module Leaders , PAT and Student Support Officer, Student Body | Increased well-being and care of care leavers/givers/ |
| Meet Government requirements for reporting Corporate Parenting Plans and Actions as necessary | Establish monitoring and reporting system to comply. | Programme Team, Quality Management Group (EQAC). | Adherence to government requirements with regard to Corporate Parenting. |